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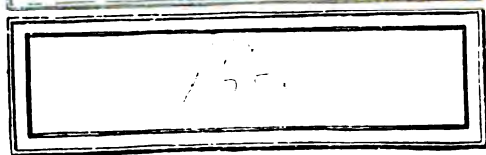
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**THE LEADING ENGLISH POETS
FROM CHAUCER TO
BROWNING**



THE LEADING ENGLISH POETS FROM CHAUCER TO BROWNING

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION
BIOGRAPHIES, AND GLOSSARY

BY

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TO WHOM
IT MAY COME

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PREFACE

THE distinctive characteristic of this anthology is the restriction of the number of poets represented with the consequent possibility of including an unusually liberal amount of the work of each author. In consulting anthologies, the present editor has felt that the collections have suffered from the attempt to include selections from all the poets who have risen above mediocrity. Such attempt has in most cases resulted in an inadequate representation of the work of any one author. No reader can feel that from a single poem of a half-dozen stanzas, or even from several short poems, he has gained a fair degree of appreciation of the poetical qualities of an author. Milton's fame does not rest upon *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Lycidas*, nor Wordsworth's upon *Tintern Abbey* and the poems of the *We are Seven* type. To appreciate the position these men rightly occupy in literature, we must have an acquaintance with more of their poetry, we must read and appreciate some of the larger and greater poems that constitute their product. In this belief the editor of the present anthology has limited the number of poets in the period between Chaucer and Browning to those he considers the leading poets, and has thus enabled himself to present, not only the well-known shorter pieces included in all collections, but much of those longer and more important poems which in the final analysis constitute the foundation of the authors' fame.

Any anthology involves judicious selection. That the present one will meet in all respects the varying judgments of all its readers is too much to expect. One person will criticize it for the amount of space devoted to Spenser as compared with that devoted to Chaucer; another will query why Herrick should be allotted so liberal a representation; a third, measuring the number of poems and pages given to the romantic authors, will accuse the editor of having yielded to the spell of the modern. Against such various lines of criticism the editor has little defense to offer. He has tried, within the limits of a single volume, to present a collection of the best and most representative poems of the leading English poets from Chaucer to Browning. He has tried in his selection to approximate the general opinion of those worthiest to judge.

The representation given to one of the poets in particular, Shakespeare, will seem unduly out of proportion to the position he justly has at the head of English literature. Shakespeare, however, is primarily a dramatist, and his greatest poetry is in dramatic form, not to be separated from its context without notable loss of significance. Hamlet's Soliloquy, to one unfamiliar with Hamlet's character and problem, would lose much of its force; Jaques' dissertation on the ages of man needs the forest background, the Duke and his company at their simple meal, and a knowledge of Jaques' character and position to render it vital. The editor has, therefore, after careful consideration, confined the selections from Shakespeare to those pieces which are purely poetical and depend little or not at all upon a dramatic context.

The text in this edition has followed that of the Cambridge editions wherever it has been possible. Many of the brief introductory notes to the separate selections have also been adapted from or taken bodily from the Cambridge editions. The short introductory outline of English poetry is intended merely as a framework in which the reader may conveniently locate the respective poets represented in the anthology. In writing the lives of these twenty-one poets the editor has striven to summarize the most important known facts and to give in a few words a criticism of the work of each poet. In the preparation of the glossary the attempt has been

made to give the modern synonyms of the obsolete, archaic, and dialectic words in the selections from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Burns.

In conclusion, the editor desires to extend his thanks to the many friends who by their advice and assistance have helped to form this anthology. When the project was first considered, a tentative table of contents was submitted to a number of persons known to be interested in the reading and study of poetry and critical coöperation was requested. Many of the suggestions given in answer to this request were of great value and were gladly adopted. Lieutenant Robert C. Richardson, Jr., at present assistant professor in the Department of English and History at West Point, prepared the glossary and read the manuscript of the biographies. Miss Irene W. Starr did much of the work in making the indices. Above all, the editor's acknowledgment is due to Professor Henry A. Beers, of Yale University, who has given much valuable criticism of the selections and of the introductory outline.

L. H. H.

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August, 1915.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	xiii
------------------------	------

Geoffrey Chaucer

TRUTH	1
LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE	1
THE CANTERBURY TALES	2
THE PROLOGUE	2
THE PRIORESSES TALE	10
THE NONNE PREESTES TALE	14

Edmund Spenser

THE FARRIE QUEENE (BOOK I)	21
EPITHALAMION	107
PROTHALAMION	112

William Shakespeare

SONGS:

"TELL ME WHERE IS FANCY BRED"	115
"UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE"	115
"BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND"	115
"O MISTRESS MINE, WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING"	115
"HARK, HARK! THE LARK AT HEAVEN'S GATE SINGS"	115
"COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS"	115
"FULL FATHOM FIVE THY FATHER LIES"	116
"WHERE THE BEE SUCKS, THERE SUCK I"	116

SONNETS:

SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY?	116
WHEN, IN DISGRACE WITH FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES	116
WHEN TO THE SESSIONS OF SWEET SILENT THOUGHT	116
NOT MARBLE, NOR THE GILDED MONUMENTS	117
LIES AS THE WAVES MAKE TOWARDS THE PEBBLED SHORE	117
WHEN I HAVE SEEN BY TIME'S FELL HAND DEFACED	117
SINCE BRASS, NOR STONE, NOR EARTH, NOR BOUNDLESS SEA	117

TIE'D WITH ALL THESE, FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY	117
NO LONGER MOURN FOR ME WHEN I AM DEAD	118
THAT TIME OF YEAR THOU MAYST IN ME BEHOLD	118
TO ME, FAIR FRIEND, YOU NEVER CAN BE OLD	118
WHEN IN THE CHRONICLE OF WASTED TIME	118
LET ME NOT TO THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS	118

Robert Herrick

HESPERIDES:

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK	119
DELIGHT IN DISORDER	119
TO DIANE	119
THE WOUNDED CUPID	119
TO DIANE	119
CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING	120
THE CAPTIV'D BEE	120
TO CHERRY-BLOSSOMS	121
TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME	121
TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING	121
TO MEADOWS	121
OBBERON'S FEAST	122
TO DAFFODILS	122
THE BRACELET TO JULIA	122
TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON	122
TO BLOSSOMS	123
TO A BED OF TULIPS	123
TO PHYLLIS, TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM	123
ART ABOVE NATURE	124
THE NIGHT-PIECE: TO JULIA	124
UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES	124
TO HIS BOOK	124

NOBLE NUMBERS:

HIS LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT	124
A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE	125

THE DIRGE OF JEPHTHAH'S	
DAUGHTER	125
TO KEEP A TRUE LENT	126
JOHN MILTON	
ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NA- TIVITY	127
L'ALLEGRO	130
IL PENSEROSO	132
LYCIDAS	133
SONNETS:	
TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL	136
ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIE- MONT	136
ON HIS BLINDNESS	137
TO CYRACK SKINNER	137
PARADISE LOST	138
JOHN DRYDEN	
MAC FLECKNOE	180
RELIGIO LAICI	183
TO THE PIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. ANNE KILLIGREW	193
A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY	196
ALEXANDER'S FEAST, OR THE POWER OF MUSIC	196
THEODORE AND HONORIA	199
ALEXANDER POPE	
ODE ON SOLITUDE	205
EPISTLE TO MRS. BLOUNT, WITH THE WORKS OF VOITURE	205
ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UN- FORTUNATE LADY	206
THE RAPE OF THE LOCK	208
ELOISA TO ABELARD	220
SATIRES:	
EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT	225
THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE SECOND BOOK OF HORACE	231
WILLIAM COLLINS	
ODE TO SIMPLICITY	238
ODE WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1746	238
ODE TO LIBERTY	239
ODE TO A LADY ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL ROSS, IN THE ACTION . OF FONTENOY	240
ODE TO EVENING	241
ODE TO PEACE	242
THE PASSIONS	242
DIRGE IN CYMBELINE	243
THOMAS GRAY	
ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT	244
ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE	244
ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD	245
TO ADVERSITY	247
SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST	248
ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE	248
OLIVER GOLDSMITH	
THE TRAVELLER	249
THE DESERTED VILLAGE	255
STANZAS ON WOMAN	261
WILLIAM COWPER	
VERSES SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY	
ALEXANDER SELKIRK	262
THE TASK (BOOK V)	262
THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN	273
ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK	276
THE POPLAR FIELD	278
ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE	278
TO THE NIGHTINGALE	279
TO MARY	279
ROBERT BURNS	
ADDRESS TO THE DEIL	281
THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT	282
TO A MOUSE	285
TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY	286
TO A LOUSE	287
SONG: COMPOSED IN AUGUST	287
ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID	288
A WINTER NIGHT	289
THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST	290
TAM O' SHANTER	290
HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER	293
A ROSE-BUD, BY MY EARLY WALK	294
THE SILVER TASSIE	294
OF A' THE AIRTS	295
MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS	295
JOHN ANDERSON MY JO	295
THOU LINGERING STAR	296
WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT	296
AE FOND KISS	296
THE BANKS O' DOON	297
THE DEIL'S AWA WI' TH' EXCISEMAN	297

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS	297
A RED, RED ROSE	298
AULD LANG SYNE	298
COMIN' THRO' THE RYE	298
DUNCAN GRAY	299
SAW YE BONNIE LESLEY	299
SCOTS, WHA HAE	299
HIGHLAND MARY	300
IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY	300
THERE WAS A LASS	301
MARY MORISON	301
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH	
A NIGHT-PIECE	303
WE ARE SEVEN	303
EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY	304
THE TABLES TURNED	304
LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY	305
THERE WAS A BOY	307
NUTTING	307
"STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN"	308
"SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS"	309
"I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN"	309
"THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER"	309
"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL"	309
LUCY GRAY	310
RUTH	310
THE PRELUDE	313
MICHAEL	324
"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BE- HOLD"	330
RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE	330
COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802	332
COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802	332
"IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE"	332
ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENE- TIAN REPUBLIC	333
TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE	333
IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802	333
LONDON, 1802	333
"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"	334
"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"	334
TO THE DAISY	334
THE GREEN LUNET	334

STEPPING WESTWARD	335
THE SOLITARY REAPER	335
YARROW UNVISITED	336
TO THE CUCKOO	336
"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"	337
"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"	337
ODE TO DUTY	337
FIDELITY	338
CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR	339
"NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CON- VENT'S NARROW ROOM"	340
COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRAS- MERE LAKE	340
"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US"	341
"WHERE LIES THE LAND TO WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?"	341
ODE. INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD	341
GIPSIES	344
SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE	345
THE EXCURSION	346
YARROW VISITED	354
TO A SKY-LARK	355
"SCORN NOT THE SONNET"	356
YARROW REVISITED	356
THE TROBACHS	357
"IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY AND PAIN"	357
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE	
X THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARI- NER	358
LOVE	367
THE NIGHTINGALE	368
X CHRISTABEL	370
X KUBLA KHAN	377
HYMN BEFORE SUN-RISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI	377
FROST AT MIDNIGHT	379
DEJECTION: AN ODE	380
YOUTH AND AGE	382
WORK WITHOUT HOPE	382
EPITAPH (NOV., 1833)	383
SIR WALTER SCOTT	
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL	384
THE LADY OF THE LAKE	392
ROKEBY (SONG, "O, BRIGNALL BANKS ARE WILD AND FAIR")	412

HUNTING SONG	412	TO ———. "MUSIC, WHEN SOFT VOICES DIE"	542
JOCK OF HAZELDEAN	413	TO ———. "ONE WORD IS TOO OFTEN PROPANED"	542
"THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL"	413	A LAMENT	543
LORD BYRON		LINES. "WHEN THE LAMP IS SHAT- TERED"	543
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE	414	A DIRGE	543
"WHEN WE TWO PARTED"	449	JOHN KEATS	
"MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART"	449	ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER	544
"AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR"	450	SONNET. "TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY FENT"	544
STANZAS FOR MUSIC. "THERE'S NOT A JOY THE WORLD CAN GIVE"	450	SONNET. "WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE"	544
STANZAS FOR MUSIC. "THERE BE NONE OF BEAUTY'S DAUGHTERS"	451	LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN	544
"FARE THEE WELL"	451	ENDYMION (BOOK I)	545
STANZAS TO AUGUSTA. "THOUGH THE DAY OF MY DESTINY'S OVER"	452	FANCY	559
EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA, "MY SISTER! MY SWEET SISTER!"	452	ODE. "BARDS OF PASSION AND OF MIRTH"	560
"SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY"	454	THE EVE OF ST. AGNES	560
"OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM"	454	ODE ON A GRECIAN URN	567
"WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFER- ING CLAY"	455	LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI	568
VISION OF BELSHAZZAR	455	ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE	568
THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB	456	LAMIA	570
THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS	456	TO AUTUMN	579
SONNET TO LAKE LEMAN	470	THE LAST SONNET	580
THE PRISONER OF CHILLON	470	MATTHEW ARNOLD	
MAZEPPA	474	REQUIESCAT	581
PROMETHEUS	483	RESIGNATION	581
BEPPA	484	SOHRAB AND RUSTUM	584
DON JUAN	496	THE FORSAKEN MERMAN	586
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY		PHILOMELA	588
ALASTOR	508	DOVER BEACH	598
ADONAIS	518	THE LAST WORD	599
SONNET — OZYMANDIAS	528	MORALITY	599
LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGA- NEAN HILLS	528	A SUMMER NIGHT	600
STANZAS, WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES	532	THE BURIED LIFE	601
ODE TO THE WEST WIND	532	LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS	602
THE INDIAN SERENADE	533	THE FUTURE	602
LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY	534	THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY	603
THE CLOUD	534	THYRSIS	608
TO A SKYLARK	535	MEMORIAL VERSES	611
ODE TO LIBERTY	536	RUGBY CHAPEL	612
TO ———. "I FEAR THY KISSES"	541	STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHAR- TREUSE	614
THE QUESTION	541	ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON	
TO NIGHT	542	THE LADY OF SHALOTT	617
		CENONE	618

THE LOTOS-EATERS	622
ULYSSES	624
TITHONUS	625
"FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL"	626
"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"	626
SONGS FROM THE PRINCESS:	
"AS THRO' THE LAND AT EVE WE WENT"	627
"SWEET AND LOW"	627
"THE SPLENDOR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS"	627
"TEARS, IDLE TEARS, I KNOW NOT WHAT THEY MEAN"	627
"HOMER THEY BROUGHT HER WAR- RIOR DEAD"	627
"COME DOWN, O MAID, FROM YONDER MOUNTAIN HEIGHT"	628
IN MEMORIAM	628
SONGS FROM MAUD:	
"COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD"	664
"O THAT 'T WERE POSSIBLE"	665
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON	666
IDYLLS OF THE KING:	
DEDICATION	669
COMING OF ARTHUR	670
GARETH AND LYNETTE	677
LANCELOT AND ELAINE	699
THE HOLY GRAIL	719
GUINEVERE	732
THE PASSING OF ARTHUR	742
TO THE QUEEN	749
CROSSING THE BAR	750
ROBERT BROWNING	
PIPPA PASSER	751
CAVALIER TUNES:	
MARCHING ALONG	759
GIVE A ROUSE	760
BOOT AND SADDLE	760
THE LOST LEADER	760
"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"	761
CRESTINA	762
LOVE AMONG THE RUINS	763
UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY	764
HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD	765

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA	766
SAUL	766
MY STAR	773
INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP	773
MY LAST DUCHESS	773
THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND	774
THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER	776
PROTUS	777
THE STATUE AND THE BUST	778
FRA LIPPO LIPPI	781
ANDREA DEL SARTO	787
RABBI BEN EZRA	790
CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS	793
PROSPICE	797
THE RING AND THE BOOK (BOOK VII. Pompilia)	798
HERVÉ RIEL	823
PHEDIPIIDES	825
CLIVE	827
EPILOGUE	832

Biographical Sketches

GEOFFREY CHAUCER	835 -
EDMUND SPENSER	838 -
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE	841 -
ROBERT HERRICK	848 -
JOHN MILTON	846 -
JOHN DRYDEN	850 -
ALEXANDER POPE	853 -
WILLIAM COLLINS	856 -
THOMAS GRAY	858 -
OLIVER GOLDSMITH	861 -
WILLIAM COWPER	865 -
ROBERT BURNS	867 -
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH	871 -
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE	874 -
WALTER SCOTT	877
GEORGE GORDON BYRON	879
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY	883
JOHN KEATS	885
MATTHEW ARNOLD	888
ALFRED TENNYSON	890
ROBERT BROWNING	893

GLOSSARY	897
--------------------	-----

INDEX OF FIRST LINES	909
--------------------------------	-----

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES	914
---------------------------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION

AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF ENGLISH POETRY FROM CHAUCER TO BROWNING

It is a curious fact that in the history of English poetry the even centuries have been the periods of the most noteworthy and original production. The age of Chaucer, the rich and exuberant English renaissance of Elizabeth's time, and the new springtide of the romantic revival came respectively in the fourteenth, sixteenth, and eighteenth centuries. We do not intend to imply that poetry lapsed in the intervals, that the odd centuries were wholly flat, stale, and unprofitable, nor do we imply that all the great poetry of our literature can be grouped around the even century marks. The exquisite lyrics of Lovelace and Suckling and Herrick, the noble verse of Milton, the polished heroic couplets of Dryden and Pope, the smooth melody and careful art of Tennyson, and the force and inspired insight of Browning would at once give us the lie. What we do mean is that the successive tides of original poetic inspiration seem to have flowed with the even and ebbed with the odd centuries. The Cavalier lyrists and even the sublime Milton are a continuation of the Elizabethan renaissance, and no one will deny the debt of Tennyson and Browning to the poetic revival in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hence for our brief outline of the course of English poetry, we are led to dwell with special emphasis upon the poetry of the age of Chaucer, of the age of Elizabeth, and of the age of Wordsworth.

I. THE CHAUCERIAN PERIOD

1340-1400

Any sketch of English poetry may well begin with Chaucer. Although it is trite now to speak of him as the "Father of English Poetry," that phrase expresses accurately his position in the history of our poetry. He won his eminence under peculiarly difficult conditions. The Norman Conquest in 1066 had prevented the establishment of a standard English speech and had given free scope to the welter of dialects, the remnants of the Anglo-Saxon contending with the new Anglo-Norman. In the field of literature, the English were in bondage to continental models. Men dreamed, maidens loved, and birds sang in England just as they conventionally did in Normandy and France. Before Chaucer, few English works have the native English flavor.

And what did Chaucer do that has won him his place as the first of our long line of English poets? Where there were no models in English for him to follow, he went in the beginning to the literatures of France and Italy, at first translating, paraphrasing, and adapting their material to his verse; but later, and herein his fame lies, he conceived (and executed in part) a great original English poem. By his association with continental Europe he tended to bring the restricted English world into a closer touch and sympathy with the great forerunners of the Renaissance. Among the chaos of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman speech, he chose with rare natural judgment the elements which combined strength and grace. With a perfect ear he introduced into English versification those meters and verse forms, with the exception of the sonnet and the

blank verse, which have been found by succeeding generations of poets to be best adapted to English.

Entirely apart from these great services to English literature, Chaucer deserves the name of poet by the character of his work. More than five hundred years have passed and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* retain their freshness and interest, — indeed, their readers are increasing in number and in devotion. Surely if permanence be one of the tests of literary worth, Chaucer's poems have met the requirement fully. Although never a poet of deep or sublime vision, Chaucer's wide sympathies, kindly humor, and accurate characterization raise his work to a rank just below that of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. He was a born story-teller and an artist in words. Other poets of his time, as Langland and Gower, had equal opportunities, but lacked the native genius that has brought Chaucer his enduring fame.

II. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Chaucer's successors in poetry during the fifteenth century paid loyal and sincere tribute to his genius, and tried to imitate his style. "O maister dere and fader reverent," says Occleve, and Lydgate in the same decade speaks of "My maister Chaucer." These successors, however, have contributed little poetry of value. They imitated the outward forms, but could not for want of genius infuse these forms with genuine emotion and vitality. We have nothing in their work to compare with the striking group of living people in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, or with the genially garrulous Wife of Bath; instead, we read endless romances and allegories, with the conventional poet's dream of Cupid and Venus, and conventional birds singing in conventional trees in a conventional month of May. We have to pass to the marvelous renaissance of the next century to find Chaucer's true poetic successors.

III. THE RENAISSANCE

There have been periods in history when the civilized world seemed to shake itself free from the trammels of traditional customs and habits of thought and definitely to take a step toward the achievement of a new and higher state of existence. One of these periods, affecting not only literature, but religion, art, politics, social relations, and all the other communal activities of men, was that of the century between 1450 and 1550. Beginning, perhaps, with the diffusion of classical Greek learning that followed the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the new life infused Italy, spread north into France, and affected even far-away England. Once started, it spread with accelerated speed and intensity. The inspiring literature of the ancient high Greek civilization revived thought and set it moving in strange and unconventional channels; the introduction of printing brought the cost of books within the reach of the ordinary reader, whereas before even a small library had been the rare luxury of the wealthy; the intrepid pushing forward of the boundaries of man's knowledge of his world by the discoveries of unsuspected lands and peoples across the sea caused thinkers to revise their theories and question accepted authorities; the revolt in the north against the authority of the established Roman Catholic Church shook the very foundations of faith. It became an age of inquiry, of search for truth and knowledge. In religion, in science, in literature, great champions arose who thought, acted, and wrote under the inspiration of new ideals.

The new sense of life, the renaissance, did not reach England until about the time of the accession of Elizabeth. Under her wise rule, the English nation seemed to expand with a new sense of importance and power. A political solidarity resulted from Henry VIII's policy toward the

Church of Rome, reaching its height at the crushing of the Armada of the Catholic power Spain. Humanists, like Erasmus and More, uncloaked the follies and vices of the time and by precept and implication pointed out the way to better conditions. Education became fashionable where before it had been the acquisition of clerics. The sons of noblemen and gentlemen were seen in increasing numbers at the universities. The foreign tour became a necessary part of a full academic course, impelling the young men to France and especially to Italy, then the recognized center of art and letters.

In English poetry, the first products of the awakening were disappointing. Englishmen were too absorbed in the political and religious turmoils incident to the revival of learning to engage in literature. It is noteworthy, however, that two young noblemen of the early part of the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, circulated their polished verses in manuscript among their courtier friends after the fashion of the Italian *litterati*. Some years after they were dead, these poems formed a large part of *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). The poems themselves are not valuable for their genuine inspiration and feeling, but for two new verse forms which they introduced into English poetry, namely, the sonnet and the blank verse. Within fifty years these two forms, crudely used by their originators, were the media for the greatest of our English poetry.

IV. THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

In the 1570's Sir Philip Sidney was still deploring the barrenness of the field of English poetry when with apparent suddenness a figure arose who summed up in himself many of the most striking characteristics of the new epoch. A product of the revival of learning in the university life, steeped in the classics and thoroughly familiar with Italian literature, a gentleman and a courtier, Edmund Spenser, by his first published poem, *The Shepheard's Calendar*, in 1579 was stamped at once as a great poet. In the same year he was working upon *The Faery Queen*, three books of which were published in 1590 and were hailed immediately as the greatest work in English. The new stanza form which he used in *The Faery Queen* was one of rare beauty and flexibility; his richness of imagination was reflected in the romantic and gorgeous pageantry of knights, dwarfs, fair ladies, horrible demons and dragons, all moving in the story of a single poem; his splendid idealism is shown in the spirit of beauty with which all nature and all common things are treated; his metrical skill and melody have never been surpassed in English poetry. Spenser sprang full-grown as the first birth of the renaissance in English poetry. Spenser many times acknowledges Chaucer as his poetical father, but in most ways he is very different. Spenser has little of the humor, the appreciation of the actual characters that lived and moved about him, the wide sympathy with men as men, that has immortalized the *Canterbury Tales*. Harry Bailly, the Wife of Bath, the Canon's Yeoman, and the rest of the famous company were beyond the power of Spenser to draw. His was a world detached from that of men, a world peopled by incarnated virtues and vices and dotted with conveniently located mountains, lakes, and grottos. Spenser shows no supreme insight into human character and motives, no dramatic genius to urge his plot rapidly to an inevitable conclusion, indeed, no superior sustained narrative power; but in his work we feel the presence of a vivid imagination and we admire the perfection of verse.

While Spenser in remote Ireland was developing the allegory *The Faery Queen* or writing his *Amoretti*, the overwhelming popularity of the drama in England was drawing the genius of all the writers of the day. Men whose individual talents might have yielded great epics or supreme lyrics wrote for the playhouses of London. Marlow, the epic master of the mighty line, Lyly,

Greene, Jonson, and the lyric Lodge, all wrote chiefly for the stage. Indeed, so notable is the poetic element in the Elizabethan drama that the plays are with justice ranked in English poetry as well as in the history of English drama.

Among the Elizabethans one name stands out supreme. In form and craftsmanship a product of his age, Shakespeare by his varied talents transcended the work of all his contemporaries. How the Stratford lad who fled penniless to London in 1587 developed into one of the world's great trilogy of poets is a mystery not to be solved until we know the physiological reasons for genius. In his twenty-three years of youth at Stratford he learned to know nature and country life; in the following years in London, he came into contact with all the varied artificial life of the city, from the dregs into which he must have fallen at the beginning to the glitter of the court with which he was familiar before the end. He saw life from many sides and with inspired insight reproduced what he saw. In an attempt to point out the particular excellencies of Shakespeare we must pause. His work reveals such depth of insight, such innate knowledge of the springs and courses of emotion, such mastery of language, such art without artifice that we lack in English the standards of comparison. He was of his age and yet superior to it. His apprenticeship was passed in the London theaters, patching up old plays and adapting old scenes to the rapidly changing demands of the time. He graduated into an original and successful playwright. He became shareholder in a theatrical company, a man of wealth and prominence. In an age when the ponderous Jonson was esteemed as the classical poet and dramatist, and when the non-classical plays were looked upon as inferior art, Shakespeare must have been unconscious of the enduring literary value of his work. He took no care to publish his work and at the prime of life retired to live in Stratford as a country gentleman. Yet these despised productions have not only been read by students through the intervening centuries, but have actually held the stage. Where his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors have been forgotten, Shakespeare is studied and acted to-day. He has become not alone an English figure, but a world figure. He was a man "who saw life steadily and saw it whole." He has command of the comic and the tragic, of the humorous and of the sublime. His harp seems to have all the range of man's life and character, from the lowest to the highest. Country squires and their hangers-on, rude artisans, thieves, servants, nobles, princes, kings, fairies, witches, magicians, he draws them all in very truth. He sees into the souls of men. He truly is one of those few who

take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies.

(a) THE METAPHYSICAL POETS

While Shakespeare was writing and the greatest dramatic products of the Elizabethan age were on the boards, John Donne and his followers were expressing the spirit of the Renaissance in their original and peculiar poetry. Dr. Johnson later gave to these men the name of "metaphysical poets," which has clung to them ever since. They were, indeed, a product of their age, expressing the liberalism which is a most striking characteristic of Elizabeth's reign. Their poetry abounded in quaint conceits, unexpected twists of thought, far-fetched analogies, paradoxes, hyperboles, unique verse forms, and deep reasoning on life, death, God, and the soul. Since English poets had been self-convicted of copying their thought and art from other literatures, English readers hailed with approval the strange novelties of Donne, Southwell, Quarles, and Herbert. In the court of James, himself an acute logician, a great value was set upon subtle metaphysical distinctions, so that Donne and his school were in their prime the chief exponents of poetry in England. To-day those very conceits and subtleties which made them acceptable

to their contemporaries have cast them into limbo, whence they are only resurrected to explain influences that affected the work of later and better known poets.

V. THE PURITAN REFORMATION

The conflict between king and Parliament which developed to a crisis in the reign of Charles separated the English into two great parties, often popularly called the Cavaliers and the Roundheads. With the king stood the Cavaliers, the nobles and courtiers, gay, brave, happy-go-lucky gentlemen: with the Parliament stood the Puritans and the defenders of civil liberty, an austere sincere minority too commonly misunderstood because of the excesses of a small party of fanatics.

(a) CAVALIER POETRY

The political division of the nation was reflected in the literature. Many of the Cavaliers were poets, not men who adopted literature as a profession, but who looked upon the knack of hitting off verses as the proper acquirement of a gentleman. Many of the verses were coarse and vulgar, many were artificial and worthless, but a few were graceful and sincere. Lovelace, Cleveland, and Sir William Davenant were Cavaliers who actually suffered for their king; Suckling, Carew, Vaughan, and Herrick sympathized with the king, although it did not fall to their lot to bear martyrdom for him.

The greatest of these Cavalier poets is Herrick. A clergyman by profession, he was in spirit a true Cavalier, gay, witty, and worldly. He was, indeed, by nature a pagan, preaching in his poems a pagan creed and loving nature with a pagan love. In his little Devonshire vicarage, far from the political turmoil of London, he wrought his delicate lyrics. He lost his churchly living at the success of the Puritans, of course, but regained it at the Restoration, and on the whole suffered little from his sympathy for the King. He was a poet of exquisite fancy and skilled artistry. As a lyricist, describing the rural scenes and customs in England or addressing a dainty love-poem to an imaginary (or real) Julia, he has few superiors in English. He is always the artist, careful of his craftsmanship, sure of his results. He has left us a larger and better amount of verse than any other of the Cavaliers.

(b) PURITAN POETRY

Of the Puritans, Marvell, Wither, and Milton stand out above all others. In a way Milton, greatest of these, has come to express both by his life and work our conception of the Puritan characteristics. His inflexible and lofty purpose, his earnestness, zeal, self-sacrifice, integrity, and rigid morality, combined with a marked austerity of manner and a narrowness of view in certain ways, are what we denote vaguely by the term "puritanical" to-day. In his poetry he is peculiarly the poet of sublimity. His subject bespeaks his nature, "Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart." The Miltonic line is a peal of deep organ music. In his greatest poem he bears us at once without seeming effort to heights from which we can discern God, Man, and Satan. Our world with its struggling millions fades into its proper perspective, and the great essential, the justification of the ways of God to men, becomes to us, as it was to the poet, foremost. In his lesser poems as in his greatest the same dignity and sustained power carry his theme at once to a height beyond that of the ordinary poet. Even in his early *Hymn on The Nativity* we find the same intense and concentrated aspiration that carried him later to *Paradise Lost*. He never wrote an ignoble line.

VI. THE RESTORATION

The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was accompanied by a violent reaction from the austerities of the Puritan rule. The worthless and licentious king infected all the society of his day, and for a time the pursuit of pleasure was the most serious business of the time. Charles modeled his court after the court of France, centering in it the fashionable idleness of the time. He encouraged in literature the tastes which he fostered in his court, so that for the most part the Restoration drama is licentious and the Restoration poetry is trifling. Buckingham, Rochester, Sedley, Buckhurst, Sackville, important court poets in their time, are to-day, so far as literature is concerned, names almost forgotten.

One man of genius emerged from this welter of poetasters — John Dryden. He had written little before the Restoration, but with the immediate outburst of literature at Charles's return he identified himself with the court party and began his career. At first occupied with panegyrics, as the fine *Annus Mirabilis*, in 1668 he set himself to the more lucrative writing for the stage, and for fifteen years was England's foremost dramatist. In 1680 he turned to satire, and in *Absalom and Achitophel* pilloried the Whig leaders of the day. Two years later he wrote a remarkable didactic poem, *Religio Laici*. After the loss of all prospect of royal favor by the Revolution of 1688, he continued bravely at work with his pen, writing *Alexander's Feast* for the musicians, translating numerous poems from the Latin, and composing his very unusual *Fables*. Dryden's range and versatility are remarkable. He is never sublime and seldom seems inspired, but he is a careful artist in his verse and has a capacity for sustained narrative and a rare talent for satire. As a poet he established the heroic couplet as the standard medium for satire, didactic, and descriptive poetry, thus ushering in the work of Pope in the next generation.

VII. THE PSEUDO-CLASSICAL PERIOD

The first half of the eighteenth century, following the death of Dryden in 1700, saw the rapid increase of prose writing and little new development in poetry. The pamphleteer flooded the stalls with political papers; the daily journals and forerunners of the modern magazines interested people by their novelty and their topical hits; Richardson and Fielding with their prose fiction gained a huge audience. Poetry in the meanwhile seemed to the contemporaries to have been established by Dryden in fixed forms and to be incapable of offering new and unexpected sensations. Readers admired art more than force and looked for polish rather than emotion. It was a periwigged era, in art as well as in fashion. Writers themselves called their age the Augustan age, seeing in Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson, and Burke the likenesses of Horace, Virgil, Cicero, and others who were the glories of Latin letters in the reign of Augustus; but modern critics prefer the term "classic" or "pseudo-classic," to indicate the artificiality as opposed to art, the social veneer, the formality, the adherence to fixed and accepted rules, in the literature of the period. The world of letters ran in well-worn grooves; there was, to contemporaries, an atmosphere of finality about art: civilization seemed to the conventional man to have struggled to its climax, from which no step in advance was conceivable.

The chief English poet of the time, Alexander Pope, expressed in his life and his work the characteristics we have noted. A vain, irritable, precocious cripple, he was, upon the appearance of his *Rape of the Lock* in 1712, heralded as the first poet of England. That position he maintained until his death thirty-two years later. During his supremacy, genuine inspiration seemed dead in England. The impassioned lyric passages of the Elizabethan and Cavalier poetry, the moral sublimity of Milton, seemed lost. The aim of Pope and his followers was to carry

Dryden's verse form to its nth degree of refinement. In the polish and nice balance of his lines he satisfied his age, but, it must be admitted, sacrificed the natural force and strength inherent in English expression. Although many of his lines and phrases give such an impression of finality of form that they have become axiomatic, his poetry when read as a whole paralyzes our attention by its monotonous swing and balance. We must not, however, condemn Pope too harshly. He was striving for the excellencies which were esteemed by his contemporary poets and he succeeded beyond them all; Blackmore, Garth, Granville, Walsh, Pomfret, Parnell are forgotten names to-day, yet they were all continuing the Dryden verse tradition with Pope. Pope never transcended his own time, never by divine insight and inspiration saw and revealed hidden beauties of form, character, thought, and ideals in his world, but he pictured in his work more perfectly than any of his contemporaries the artificial and superficial qualities of the world in which he moved.

The principles of the classical or pseudo-classical school were those of Goldsmith, but, in curious agreement with the inconsistency of this poet's character, a tenderness and sincerity of sentiment which belong to a new and different order of poetry are embodied within the classical forms in his best poems. By instinct Goldsmith was a romanticist; by training and by association he was a classicist. His *Deserted Village* is a rhymed essay comparable in style to Pope's *Essay on Man*. It has been redeemed from the oblivion that has been the lot of so many similar poems by its direct and sincere human sympathy, its simplicity of language and vividness of characterization. We may regret the monotony of the rhymed couplets, but we treasure the picture of Auburn, and the village parson, and the village schoolmaster, and the spirit of ideality in which the whole scene is conceived.

VIII. EARLY ROMANTICISM

The excess of polish and formality in the poetry of Pope and his school induced its own reaction, a reaction not sudden, violent, or universal, but none the less significant. Even within the lifetime of Pope this reaction began and it continued with increasing vigor after his death. The vague dissatisfaction with current poetical standards and models expressed itself at first in the revival of the study of old authors. The love for Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton had never died away entirely, even in the vagaries of literary fashions, and the new lyrists drew inspiration from the works of these poets. Allan Ramsay with his Scotch dialect poems and his pastorals, and James Thomson with his *Castle of Indolence* and *Seasons*, hark directly back to Spenser; Collins and Gray are infused with the spirit of Milton, not the Milton of *Paradise Lost*, but the lyric Milton of the *Nativity Ode*, of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, of *Lycidas*; and William Cowper shakes himself at the end entirely free from bondage to the contemporary fashions.

Of these forerunners of the new movement in poetry, Collins and Gray were greatest, — greatest not because of clearer consciousness of the novelty of their work, but because of a truer and finer poetic inspiration. These two poets are always linked together in literary history. They both wrote exquisite odes, they both were followers of Milton, they both are now considered as belonging spiritually and emotionally to the romanticists. Gray has left a larger body of completed work than Collins and his *Elegy* has achieved a popularity that no poem of Collins has ever approached, yet many critics discern in the work of Collins a finer music, a more vivid imagination, and a truer sense of the ideal form and expression than in that of his contemporary. As lyrists in an age when the lyric was submerged beneath a flood of ethic and didactic couplets, they together carry their poetic tradition from the later Elizabethans to within a generation of Wordsworth.

Very different from the work of Collins and Gray is that of Cowper, and yet the latter is equally opposed to the artistic standards of the school of Pope. Cowper's few famous lyrics (as *On Receipt of My Mother's Picture*, and *The Poplar Field*) are marked by a sincerity of feeling and a truth of expression not found among the poets of the pseudo-classical group, and his greatest poem, *The Task*, is written in an easy, flowing blank verse directly contrary in movement to the poised and monotonous heroic couplets. But Cowper's fame rests upon the loving care with which he drew in *The Task*, a succession of pictures of the scenes, sounds, and incidents in lowly country life. His is what may be called familiar verse. It is nearest the type and tone of conversation. Nothing in the sights about him is too trivial for passing comment, nothing too lowly for his affectionate interest. As we read his verse, we are present with him in his walk, listening to his gentle and sympathetic descriptions of plowman or postman, or of woods or brooks. Though he had not, it is true, the philosophic fervor and passionate force of Wordsworth at his best, he anticipated the latter poet in the kindly descriptions of humble country life.

Shortly after the half-century mark was passed, new influences of the first importance determined the course of the growing literary movement. The attention of the world of letters was drawn to the great wealth of folklore poetry extant in out-of-the-way corners of the world. Collections, discoveries, translations set literary men afire with a new enthusiasm. Brilliant charlatans took advantage of the excitement to forge rude poems purporting to have been found in old churches, abbeys, and the like. It was the time when Ossian was published, and when the "marvelous boy" Chatterton brought to London his Rowley forgeries. Macpherson in 1760 published his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands*; two years later he followed this with the epic *Fingal*, purporting to be a prose translation from the Gaelic of the poet Ossian; three years later the scholarly Percy, later bishop of the Irish Church, contributed a systematic collection of folk-songs and ballads in three volumes, *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*; containing among many the wonderful *Chevy Chase*, *Nut Brown Mayde*, and *Battle of Otterburn*, and in 1770 Percy widened the interest by introducing to the contemporary English world the fascinating rugged mythology of the old Danish, Norse, and Icelandic peoples.

What the work of this unusual decade from 1760 to 1770 did for the romantic movement was to give it definite models and, in a way, recognized standards for a revolt against the accepted formality of contemporary verse. The ballads were simple and rude compared with the faultless style of Pope, but Pope's influence was waning fast. Men turned from the monotonous perfection of his verse to thrill at the direct view of nature and the deep emotion in the old ballads. Sincerity of feeling again became vital to good poetry. The classicists fought to the last, scoffed at the rude verses of a primitive time, but in the end the romanticists carried the day.

With the revival of interest in the ancient ballad poetry came also a general revival of interest in things of ancient time. Gothic architecture, once despised, began to be admired; a glamour was cast by the imagination over the past ages obscuring the elements of rudeness, brutality, and vice, and stressing the supposed chivalry, honor, and courage of earlier ages; the element of mystery in the unknown and unknowable excited abnormal interest; Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* was the forerunner of the romances of terror of Mrs. Radcliffe and "Monk" Lewis.

And then toward the latter part of the century came the throes of the revolution across the channel, exciting among many in England the keenest interest and sympathy. No cause could be nearer and dearer to the English heart than the cause of liberty for which the French people claimed to be fighting. Coleridge was on fire for the cause, and Wordsworth, who was traveling in France, was only restrained from taking personal leadership in the Girondist party by the

stoppage of his allowances from home. Naturally intelligent people thought and talked of little else for years after 1789.

Thus, then, the romantic movement grew. Begun in the age of Pope by a reaction against his polished form and a reversion to the variety and sincerity of feeling of the Elizabethans, it was deeply influenced by the growth of interest in the folk-songs and ballads, by the revival of a love for the mediæval, and by the struggle across the Channel for liberty. It was a movement of rich variety, dominated by no one school of thought or method. The work of one is a return to simplicity of style, with depth of thought and sincerity of emotion, of another is marked by emphasis upon the fantastic, imaginative elements of mediævalism, of another is a modern rendition of ancient folklore, of another is a fanatical adherence to the principles of freedom. Each in his own way feels and interprets the new life in English poetry. The romantic movement is, indeed, as Hugo called it, "liberalism in literature."

During this period, in the north arose a poet who, although by birth and education out of touch with the direct course of the romantic revival, exemplified in his lyrics prominent elements in that movement. It is difficult to account for Robert Burns. Born into a life and environment similar to those of thousands of other Scotch peasant boys, he rose by his native genius to be the foremost literary figure of his time. That his irregular life brought its inevitable result in ostracism and early death cannot affect the beauty and melody of his songs. In these songs, Burns is without peer. Love, humor, satire, pathos, intimate sympathy with nature and with man, all find a place in them. He wrote poetry not by rule, but by instinct. "Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poetry by rule," he said in his first preface, "he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him in his and their native language." He is distinctly the poet of nature, expressing in simple familiar language the emotions common to all men.

IX. ROMANTICISM

The conscious recognition of the new movement in poetry came with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Wordsworth and Coleridge collaborated to produce this thin volume of poems written in accordance with new and original — so far as classical rules went — principles of poetry. Later each of the poets explained in prose, Wordsworth in his *Prefaces* and Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria*, what these new principles were, dwelling upon simplicity of diction, truth to nature, power of the imagination, and universality of subject-matter. Wordsworth's insistence upon universality of subject-matter and simplicity of diction clashed with the beliefs of the fast-vanishing classical school, for it had long been the belief that certain subjects and situations were in themselves peculiarly adapted to poetic treatment in contrast to other subjects, and that the poet's task was merely to give to such subjects and situations their perfect embodiment in expression. Hence came the classical finish and polish, hence the conscious artificiality of much of the work of the classical school.

But after all, important as the new principles were, the romantic movement is not now known by its principles so much as by its product. Wordsworth and Coleridge were true poets, gifted with the divine insight and faculty of expression that reveals to men the unknown beauties of the world in which they live. Wordsworth was from his youth peculiarly sensitive to natural influences; he came to believe all nature to be directly infused with the presence of a living God; and he realized that the truth that lay behind the universal experiences of men, the common passions and labors, hopes and fears, was the only subject of poetic interest. Nature, and man in nature, were, therefore, his poetic material. A poet, he writes, "is a man speaking to men: a

man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him, delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them."

Coleridge's greatest single work was the *Ancient Mariner*, in which he created by imaginative suggestion an illusion of reality about a supernatural subject. Coleridge represents a different phase of the revival from that represented by Wordsworth, namely, the love of the mysterious and unfathomable in nature. We see it again in *Christabel*, we feel it in the wonderful verses to *Genesieve*. His speculative mind was naturally drawn to mystery and his poetic genius gave to the mysterious apt expression. His vivid imagination, his perfect use of suggestion, his inspired melody of verse stamp him naturally as the greater poet of the two, but unhappily the promise of his young manhood was drowned in laudanum. His later critical writings, great as they are, cannot compensate us for the loss to creative poetry.

The *Lyrical Ballads* were not immediately popular. No one could make head or tail out of the *Ancient Mariner*, and but very few appreciated *Tintern Abbey*. The poetry was too new; the principles enunciated (1800) in the preface were too startling. The literary world could more easily appreciate the first poetry of Walter Scott, which followed more directly the natural development of the revival of interest in the folk-poetry. Scott in 1802-03 published a collection of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and followed this two years later with his first original poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This narrative poetry, vigorous, heroic, rapid, was at once understood and widely read. Continuing in this vein, Scott poured forth tale after tale in verse, awakening England and Scotland to a high pitch of enthusiasm, then suddenly, with the rise of a new star and the relative decline in popularity of his own poems, stopped, turned to prose, and with his romantic fiction achieved an even greater popularity than before.

Scott's poetry was both romantic and immediately popular. To-day we read it for its absorbing narrative interest rather than for its high imaginative quality. Occasional songs and ballads, interspersed in the action of his poems, show great lyrical genius. Scott was not, however, a careful artist: his scenes and characters are hastily limned and then the succession of incidents occupies all our attention.

X. HEIGHT OF ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

As the romantic movement was characteristically a movement for freedom in literature, it was natural that in its manifestations it should reflect, more than the literature of Pope's influence ever had, the differing individualities of its writers. Thus, as we have already seen, Wordsworth was a romanticist by virtue of his return to nature and to simplicity of expression, Coleridge by his strangeness and mystery cloaked by an illusion of reality, and Scott by his direct continuance of the tradition of the old narrative ballad story. All of these were for a time eclipsed by a new genius who won unprecedented popular success by the imaginative self-revelation of an individual mind endowed with great energy and openly rebellious against the social and political constraints of the time. The spirit of the French Revolutionists, which appealed to a very large section of the English people, found nowhere a more brilliant exponent than George Gordon, Lord Byron.

The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* appeared in March of 1812, and, as Byron expressed it, "I awoke in the morning to find myself famous." The poet-peer had caught to a nicety the

romantic sensibility of his contemporary world. Within the next few years he astonished and delighted the fashionable London world with a succession of poetic romances, wildly extravagant in plot, intensely individual in style, and imaginatively representative of the tacit unrest in the social order of his day. His social ostracism consequent upon his separation from his wife drove him abroad, whence he could indulge himself even more freely in satire against the bondage of English conventions and, indeed, of all conventions. His later works are all infused with this cynical disparagement of social bonds, this cry of the individual for freedom. His death when aiding the Greeks in their struggle for independence crowned the work of his life with the spirit of self-sacrifice and did much to efface the memory of his past misdeeds.

As a poet Byron was supremely gifted. Through his own intense individuality he caught a universal spirit of his time, the spirit of dissatisfaction and revolt, and embodied it in imaginative forms. Byron was a romanticist, but a romanticist representative of his own age rather than of an interest in and love for the past.

With Byron we may associate another poet of revolt, Shelley. Shelley, too, was of noble lineage, and suffered social ostracism because he chose to break with the conventions of English society. Shelley, too, found his happiness abroad, there composing many of his greatest poems. Shelley, too, was an individualist, but where Byron's individualistic revolt carried him into practical immorality and bitter and contemptuous satire as a protest against the hypocrisy of the smug London world, Shelley's led him into the realm of the ideal where he endeavored to create a life free from the constraints imposed by what he believed to be ignorance and tyranny. Few people have been so unworldly as Shelley. He lived continually amid visions created by his own vivid imagination. His poetry reflects the passionate fervor of his mental life: he was forever trying to cast in the mould of language the insubstantial images that crowded upon him, to fix indelibly the spirit of wind, or of the bird, or of man. His task was foredoomed to failure, but in the very failure lay success, for his ideals are the ideals of all men and the pain he expresses is the common agony we all suffer.

John Keats, almost unnoticed during his life, has risen in time to a place beside Shelley among the poets of the early part of the century. His poetry, however, and his life were both widely different from the poetry and life of Shelley: there is scarcely more to link their names together than the fact that they were contemporary lyric poets. Keats was not a poet of revolt, for during the whole of his short life he kept aloof from human interests to lose himself in his love for beauty. He did not condemn social customs because in his poetical life he took no interest in them. Poetry was to him a passion, the very essence of life, and the truth of poetry was beauty. He sought this beauty especially in the myths and legends of the past, not alone in Grecian literature but in English. He enriched the romantic movement by recapturing the spirit of the Elizabethan poets. He was drawn to the Elizabethans by their splendid imagery, their easy flowing verse, their fiery enthusiasm and force. He attempted to treat the classical myths with the Elizabethan freedom. He sought for subjects in which he might embody the forms of beauty that fitted before his imagination. His best work is in poems like *Lamia* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, where the interest of the narrative is to him secondary to the picturesque situations and environment. He excelled in gorgeous word-painting, visualizing and expressing his scenes with rare imagination.

XI. THE VICTORIAN AGE

A literary revival cannot be maintained continuously at its height of emotional inspiration. Roughly speaking, we may locate the romantic revival between 1780 and 1830; after the latter

year we pass by degrees into the sober after-thought of the Victorian era. Where the romantic revival was marked by an enthusiasm for rebellion against established conventions, a liberalism in art, a love for the simple and natural, the quieter and calmer Victorian age is characterized by introspection and by moral purpose. The new age fostered prose rather than poetry. A large and most important body of prose criticism appeared, showing how the new age needed time and thought to assimilate the inspired lessons of the romanticists. The novel, essay, and history made greater strides than the poem. And both in prose and verse a strong underlying moral purpose is evident, a probing into reasons for social, civil, and religious ills and an attempt to cure them.

Matthew Arnold remains one of the prominent poets of the period. He was a highly educated man, preaching the crusade of culture against philistinism with a passionate zeal and sincerity. The prose essays in criticism have established for him a higher reputation, perhaps, than has his poetry, and yet he was professor of poetry at Oxford and the small body of poetry he has left ranks high.

In his poetry Arnold reflects a certain hesitation and doubt on fundamental religious conceptions. He inherited from his home environment a positive belief in accepted dogma, but his own intellectual desire for more and exact knowledge brought continual questioning and uncertainty. In his poems are recurrent notes of sadness and regret, perhaps inspired by his inward struggle between faith and skepticism. His poetry is intellectual rather than emotional. He found his true expression in his critical writings.

Much more completely than Arnold did Tennyson reflect the temper of his time, for where Arnold's range was narrow, Tennyson's was broad. Tennyson not only revealed contemporary doubts and fears, but also contemporary ambitions, hopes, enthusiasms, ideals. Arnold was critic as well as poet, and inspector of schools and professor at Oxford as well as critic and poet: Tennyson was only a poet. All his life long, Tennyson's whole devotion was to poetry. He occupied a unique place, for he was not a poet, but *the* poet of his country.

Not until 1842 was his position established; after the publication of his *Poems* in that year, containing such treasures as *Ulysses* and *Morte d'Arthur*, his supremacy was never questioned. In 1850 he succeeded Wordsworth as poet laureate and published *In Memoriam*, on which he had worked at intervals during the previous sixteen years. The last of the *Idylls of the King* appeared in 1885, the first having been written (not then with a definite idea of an epic cycle) more than forty years before. He wrote steadily until the year of his death, his later works retaining much of the beauty and inspiration of his earlier.

It is difficult now to place Tennyson with certainty in his relative rank among English poets, for we are still so near him that the glamour of his life and contemporary fame blind us. It is doubtful whether he is to be considered as a great original genius, the introducer of new ideas into the world of men. He seems not so much the leader of men as their representative man. He incorporates contemporary ideas in verse: he does not add to the sum of human knowledge. He is the result of his age rather than the creator of his age.

As a poet Tennyson's work is the union of the best qualities of his predecessors: he had the visionary sweetness of Spenser, the simplicity of the ballads as revived in the style of Wordsworth, the majestic power of Milton, the beauty of Keats. It must be admitted, however, that with the union of these qualities, each quality loses a little of its special perfection. Perhaps we feel in Tennyson art rather than inspiration, the sane and worthy poet rather than the seer whose fire is direct from heaven.

Tennyson represented the emotions and ideals of his age: his great contemporary, Robert Browning, strove to pierce deeper into the individual soul in search of the ultimate spiritual

secrets. Browning's degree of success may win for him, in the final judgment of men in years to come, a higher rank than Tennyson. His admirers even now place him second only to Shakespeare.

Browning's ideals in poetry were of the highest. Were we to judge him by these he would indeed rank, not below, but with, Shakespeare, for he sought to find the springs of human thought, feeling, and action, and reveal them to men. He had the insight of a true poet, the vision of a seer and a prophet. With this he combined a rare mental breadth and freedom from bias. He hated cant and hypocrisy and any evidence of these. He impresses us at times as fain to accept unquestioningly the essential rightness of things in this perplexing world of involved sin, suffering, virtue, and happiness; but the man who could write the *Ring and the Book* can scarcely be accused of narrowness.

If Browning had this poetic insight and breadth of view, why cannot he rank indisputably with our greatest? The difficulty lies in his expression. His idioms, his constructions, his language have from his first publications proved a stumbling-block to the wide popular appreciation of his genius. His imaginative creations, wonderfully true and beautiful in their conception, are too often misshapen and warped in their material embodiment. Where a reader's mental effort is distracted continually from the idea to the knotty involved phrases and ejaculations by which the idea is cast forth, that reader is likely to cease the effort. The formation of a Browning society in Browning's lifetime was not a compliment to the poet, but a confession of weakness: it has actually done him more harm than good in stamping him as the poet of a clique rather than the poet of mankind. Shakespeare needed no Shakespearean society in his lifetime to interpret his plays to those who thronged daily to the Globe.

As time goes on, however, the ill-fame of *Sordello* and the ill-advised eulogies of the Browning clique are losing their effect, and among an ever-widening class of cultivated readers Browning is being recognized as worthy to stand among the great poetic creators in our literature. More and more people are braving the difficulties of style to grasp the imaginative vision beneath. He emerges greater as he is more popularly understood.

Browning is the last of the giants. With him who died but a generation ago this outline can fitly close. Much poetry has been written since he died, but none that bears the stamp of lasting greatness. What figures are on the horizon we can but dimly guess. Of one thing, however, we can feel sure: the age of poetry is not gone and will never go. So soon as an inspired poet speaks to men, then will the souls of men respond as they have in the past. A love of poetry is the essence of great thought and great living.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER¹

TRUTH

BALADE DE BON CONSEYL

FLIE fro the prees, and dwelle with soth-
fastnesse,
Suffyce unto thy good, though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikel-
nesse,
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal;
Savour no more than thee bilove shal;
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst
rede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
Is trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Gret reste stant in lital businesse; 10
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the
wal.
Daunte thy-self, that dauntest otheres dede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her nis non boom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of
thy stal! 18
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye way, and lat thy goost thee lede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

ENVOY

Therefore, thou vache, leve thyn old wrecch-
ednesse
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, havenlich mede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.
Explicit Le bon counseill de G. Chaucer

LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE

BALADE

Som tyme this world was so stedfast and
stable
That mannes word was obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and deceivable,
That word and deed, as in conclusioun,
Ben no-thing lyk, for turned up so doun
Is al this world for mede and wilful-
nesse,
That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so vari-
able
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
Among us now a man is holde unable, 10
But-if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wrecched-
nesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put doun, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun,
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable.
Through covetyse is blent discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikel-
nesse, 20
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

LENVOY TO KING RICHARD

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be repreveable
To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy sward of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthi-
nesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

Explicit

¹ The text adopted in these extracts is that of the Skeat edition. — Ed.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE PROLOGUE

*Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of
Caunterbury*

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the
rote,

And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
WHAN Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yē, 10
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Thau longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge
strondes)

To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were
seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, 30
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our way, ther as I yow devyse.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to reason,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what de-
gree; 40

And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy
man,

That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.

In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete
See

At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.

He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong

SQUYER,

A lovyere, and a lusty bachelor, 80
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in
presse.

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of
strengthe.

And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of freshe floures, whyte and rede. 90
Singing he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.

Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde.

Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde. He coude songes make and wel endyte, luste and eek daunce, and wel purtreie and wryte.

So hote he lovede, that by nightertale He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale. Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable, And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo At that tyme, for him liste ryde so; And he was clad in cote and hood of grene; A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly: His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),

And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe. A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage. Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage. Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer, 111 And by his syde a sword and a bokeler, And on that other syde a gay daggere, Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere; A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene. An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene; A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE, That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;

Hir gretteste ooth was but by sýnt Loy; And she was cleped madame Eglyntyne. 121 Ful wel she song the service divyne, Eatuned in hir nose ful semely; And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly, After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe, For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe. At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle; She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle, Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe. 129 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe, That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest. In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest. Hir over lippe wypped she so clene, That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte, And sikerly she was of greet disport. And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port, And peyned hir to countrefete chere Of court, and been estatlich of manere, 140 And to ben holden digne of reverence. But, for to spoken of hir conscience,

She was so charitable and so pitous, She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous Caught in a trape, if it were deed or bledde.

Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed. But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed, Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte: And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150 Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was; Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas; Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;

But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed; It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe; For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe. Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war. Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene; And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160

On which ther was first write a crowned A, And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she, That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the mais-trye,

An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; A manly man, to been an abbot able. Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable: And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here

Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170 And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle, Ther as this lord was keper of the celle. The reule of saint Maure or of saint Beneit, By-cause that it was old and som-del streit, This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace, And held after the newe world the space. He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen, That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;

Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees, Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre. But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre; And I seyde, his opinioun was good. What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,

Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure, Or swinken with his handes, and labour, As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?

Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.

Therefore he was a pricasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in
flight; 190

Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleeves purfild at the hound
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any
glas,

And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point; 200
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certainly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A FRERE ther was, a wantoun and a
merye,

A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can 210
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge women, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy women of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For his ordre he was licentiat. 220

Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte, 230
He may nat wepe al-though him sore smerte.
Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre frere.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certainly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,

And everich hostiler and tappestere 240
Bet than a lazor or a beggestere;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorde nat, as by his faculte,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
Ther was no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
[And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his
haunt;]

For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his '*In principio*,'
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, or he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he coude, as it were right a
whelpe

In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer, 260
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scooler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his
tonge;

And in his harping, whan that he had
songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night. 270
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked
berd,

In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His reasons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge alway thencrees of his winning.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel coude he in eschange sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette; 280
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevi-
saunce.

For sothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him
calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.

As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake; 290
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
 For him was lever have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
 Than robes riche, or fithel, or gay sautrye.
 But al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre; 300
 But al that he mighte of his freundes hente,
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
 And baily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleue.
 Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
 And that was seyed in forme and reverence,
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
 Souninge in moral vertu was his speche, 309
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
 That often hadde been at the parrys,
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
 Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
 He sewed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
 Justye he was ful often in assyse,
 By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
 For his science, and for his heigh renoun
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
 So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon. 320
 Al was fee simple to him in effect,
 His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
 No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.
 In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
 That from the tyme of king William were
 falle.

Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,
 There coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
 He rood but boomy in a medlee cote 330
 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
 Of his array telle I no longer tale.

A FRANKKLEYN was in his companye;
 Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
 To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
 For he was Epicurus owne sone,
 That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
 Was verraily felicitee parfyt. 340
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
 Seint Iulian he was in his couteere.

His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
 A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
 With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
 Of alle deynteys that men coude thiuke.
 After the sondry seasons of the year,
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper. 350
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
 And many a breem and many a luce in
 stewe.

Wo was his cook, but-if his sance were
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
 His table dormant in his halle alway
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.
 At sessionys ther was he lord and sire;
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
 An anlas and a gipsy al of silk
 Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk. 360
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;
 Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

AN HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
 A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,
 Were with us eek, clothed in o liverie,
 Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
 Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;
 Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,
 But al with silver, wrought ful cleue and
 weel

Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel. 370
 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
 To sitten in a yeldhalle on a days.
 Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.
 For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
 And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
 And elles certein were they to blame.
 It is ful fair to been y-clept "ma dame,"
 And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
 And have a mantel royalliche y-bore. 380

A COOK they hadde with hem for the
 nones,
 To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
 And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
 Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London
 ale.

He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and
 frye,
 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
 That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
 For blankmanger, that made he with the
 beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by
 weste: 390

For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,
In a gowne of falding to the knee.

A dagge hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al
broun;

And, certainly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he
y-drawe

From Burdeaux-ward, whyl that the chap-
man sleep.

Of nyce conscience took he no keep. 400
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every
lond.

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stromes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemen-
age,

Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been
shake.

He knew wel alle the havenes, as they
were,

From Gootland to the cape of Finistere, 410
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF
PHISYK,

In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was groundid in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.

Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient. 420

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or
drye,

And where engendred, and of what
humour;

He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the
rote,

Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius, 431
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;

Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible. 440
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;
And yet he was but easy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,
But she was som-del deef, and that was
scathe.

Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an
haunt,

She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. 450
In al the parissh wyf ne was ther noon
That to the offring bifore hir sholde
goon;

And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was
she,
That she was out of alle charitee.

Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and
newe.

Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of
hewe. 460

She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten other compaigne in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge stream;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at saint Iame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye. 470
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hippe large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawship wel coude she laughe and
carpe.

Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN of a toun; 480
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,

That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parissheis devoutly wolde he teche,
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his thythes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Un-to his povre parissheis aboute ⁴⁹⁰
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-
 sonder,

But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and
 lyte,

Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he
 taughte; ⁴⁹⁹

Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold
 live.

He sette nat his benefice to hyre, ⁵⁰⁹
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
 And ran to London, un-to seynt Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his
 folde,

So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and vertuous,
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche dangerous ne digne,
 But in his teching discret and benigne. ⁵²⁰
 To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisinesse:
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
 A better preest, I trowe that nowher noon
 is.

He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-
 selfe. ⁵³⁰

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his
 brother,
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a
 fother,

A trewe swinker and a good was he,
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
 And thanne his neighebour right as him-
 selfe.

He woldo threashe, and ther-to dyke and
 delve,

For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might. ⁵⁴⁰
 His thythes payed he ful faire and wel,
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
 A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
 A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namo.
 The MILLER was a stout carl, for the
 nones,

Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
 That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
 At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke
 knarre, ⁵⁵¹

Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of
 harre,

Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
 And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
 Up-on the cop right of his nose he hadde
 A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
 Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
 His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde; ⁵⁶⁰
 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
 He was a langlere and a goliardeys,
 And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
 Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thyres;
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
 And ther-with-al he broghte us out of
 towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
 Of which achatours mighte take exemple
 For to be wyse in bying of vitaille. ⁵⁷¹
 For whether that he payde, or took by
 taille,

Algate he wayted so in his achat,
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace

The wisdom of an heep of lerned men ?
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
 That were of lawe expert and curious; 579
 Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,
 Worthly to been stiwardes of rente and lond
 Of any lord that is in Engelond,
 To make him live by his propre good,
 In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
 Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen al a shire
 In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
 And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

The REVE was a splendre colerik man,
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
 His heer was by his eres round y-shorn. 591
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
 Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
 Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
 Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
 Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
 Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the

reyn,

The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye, 599
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
 Was hoonly in this revs governing,
 And by his covenaut yaf the rekening.
 Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
 Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.
 Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
 They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
 His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,
 With grene trets shadwed was his place.
 He coude better than his lord purchase. 610
 Ful riche he was astored prively,
 His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
 To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
 In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,
 That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
 A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
 And by his syde he bar a rusty blade. 620
 Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
 Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeawelle.
 Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
 And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place,
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubianes face,
 For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
 As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;
 Of his visage children were aferd. 630

Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimston,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
 That him mighte helpen of his wheelkes

whyte,

Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as

blood.

Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were

wood.

And whan that he wel drunken hadde the

wyn,

Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn. 639

A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,
 That he had lerned out of som decree;
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
 And eek ye knowen wel, how that a lay
 Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.
 But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;
 Ay ' *Questio quid iuris* ' wolde he crye.

He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
 A better felawe sholde men noght finde. 649

He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
 A good felawe to have his concubyn
 A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
 Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.

And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
 He wolde techen him to have non awe,
 In swich cas, of the erchedeknes cura,
 But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
 For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.
 'Purs is the erchedeknes belle,' seyde he.
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede; 661
 Of cursing oghte eek giltly man him drede—
 For curs wol slee, right as assoilling sav-

eth—

And also war him of a *significavit*.

In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
 The yonge girles of the diocysse,
 And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
 A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake. 679

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER
 Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer.
 That streight was comen fro the court of

Rome.

Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'
 This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun.
 Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax.
 But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of

flex;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
 And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
 But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
 But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon, 682
 For it was trussed up in his walet.
 Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe let;
 Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
 Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
 His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
 Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al
 hoot.

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot. 690
 No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
 As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;
 I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
 But of his craft, fro Berwik-into Ware,
 Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
 Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:
 He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
 That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he
 wente

Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente. 700
 He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
 Bat with thise relikes, whan that he fond
 A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
 Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and lapes,
 He made the person and the peple his apes.
 But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
 He was in chirobe a noble ecclesiaste. 710
 Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
 Bat alderbest he song an offertorie;
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
 He moste preehe, and wel affyle his tonge,
 To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
 Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
 Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the
 cause

Why that assembled was this companye
 In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye, 720
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
 Bat now is tyme to yow for to telle
 How that we baren us that ilke night,
 Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
 And after wol I telle of our viage,
 And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
 But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,
 That ye narette it nat my vileinye,
 Though that I pleylnly speke in this matere,
 To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere; 730

Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
 For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
 Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
 He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
 Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
 Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
 Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
 He may nat spare, al-though he were his
 brother;

He moot as wel seye o word as another. 740
 Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
 And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
 Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
 The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
 Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
 And to the soper sette he us anon; 750
 And served us with vitaille at the beste.
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us
 leste.

A semely man our hoste was with-alle
 For to han been a marshal in an halle;
 A large man he was with eyen stepe,
 A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe: 760
 Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-
 taught,

And of manhood him lakkede right naught.
 Eek therto he was right a mery man,
 And after soper pleyen he bigan, 760
 And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
 Whan that we hadde maad our rekenings;
 And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,
 Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
 I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
 At ones in this herberwe as is now.
 Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
 And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght. 770

Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
 The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
 For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
 To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon; -
 And therefore wol I maken yow disport,
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
 And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
 Now for to stonden at my Iugement, 780
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
 To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,

Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.'

Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
Us thought it was noght worth to make it
wys,

And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for
the beste; 790

But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyne
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of
alle,

That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas, 800
Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my lugement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo, 810
And I wol erly shape me therfore.'

This thing was graunted, and our othes
swore

With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales luge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
We been accorded to his lugement. 820
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
We drouken, and to reste wente echon,
With-outen any lenger tarynge.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,
Un-to the watering of saint Thomas.
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow
leste. 830

Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,

Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my lugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth out, er that we ferrer twinne;
He which that hath the shortest shal bi-
ginne.'

Here endeth the prolog of this book.

THE PRIORESSES PROLOGUE

*Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to the
Shipman and to the lady Prioressse*

'WEL seyde, by *corpus dominus*,' quod our
hoste,

'Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil mariner!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad
year!

A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a
lape!

The monk putte in the mannes hood an
ape,

And in his wyves eek, by saint Anstin!
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.

But now passe over, and lat us seke
aboute,

Who shal now telle first, of al this route, 10
Another tale; and with that word he
sayde,

As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
'My lady Prioressse, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?'

'Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal
here.

Explicit

THE PRIORESSES TALE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PRIORESSES TALE

Domine, dominus noster

O LORD our lord, thy name how merveil-
lous

Is in this large worlde y-sprad — quod
she: —

For noght only thy laude precions
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn herynge.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour 9
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encreasen hir honour;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules
bote. —

O moder mayde! O mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, breunninge in Moyse's
sight,
That ravishedest down fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in
thalight,
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience, 20
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy pre-
yere,
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere.

My conning is so wayk, O blisful qnene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse, 30
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or
lese,
That can unnethes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
Gydeh my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit

Here biginneth the Prioresses Tale

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerweye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye; 40
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or
wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Down at the farther ende, in which ther
were
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen
blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer

Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among these children was a widwes sone, 50
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, wher-as he saugh thimage
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and
seye

His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday sone lere; 60
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so young to Crist did reverence.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and
ner,

And herkued ay the wordes and the note,
Till he the firste vers coude al by rote. 70

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye
Texponnden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preye he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have herd
seye,

Was maked of our blisful lady free, 80
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we
deye

I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre, 90
I wol it conne, our lady for to honour.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
 Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
 And than he song it wel and boldly
 Fro word to word, acordung with the note;
 Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
 To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
 On Cristes moder set was his entente.

As I have seyð, thurgh-out the Iewerye
 This litel child, as he cam to and fro, ¹⁰⁰
 Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
 The swetnes hath his herte perced so
 Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
 He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our friste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
 That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,
 Up swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple, alas!
 Is this to yow a thing that is honest, ¹⁰⁵
 That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
 Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han conspyred
 This innocent out of this world to chace;
 An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
 That in an alei hadde a privee place;
 And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
 This cursed Iew him hente and heeld him
 faste,
 And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe
 Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.
 O cursed folk of Herodes al newe, ¹²⁵
 What may your yvel entente yow availle?
 Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
 And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,
 The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souted to virginitee,
 Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon
 The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she, ¹³⁰
 'Of which the grete evangelist, seint Iohn,
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they
 that goon
 Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
 That never, fleshy, wommen they ne knewe.'

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
 For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
 With face pale of drede and bisy thought,
 She hath at scole and elles-where him sought,

Til finally she gan so far espye
 That he last seyn was in the Iewerye. ¹⁴⁰

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
 To every place wher she hath supposed
 By lykliheðe hir litel child to finde;
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte.
 Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
 To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place, ¹⁴⁵
 To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by.
 They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,
 Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
 That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
 Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
 He '*Alma redemptoris*', gan to singe ¹⁵⁰
 So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete
 wente,
 In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
 And hastily they for the provost sente;
 He cam anon with-outen taryng.
 And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
 And after that, the Iewes leet he binde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
 Up-taken was, singing his song alway; ¹⁷⁰
 And with honour of greet processiou
 They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
 His moder swowning by the bere lay;
 Unnethe might the peple that was there
 This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon
 This provost dooth thise Iewes for to starve
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
 He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
 Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve. ¹⁸⁰
 Therfor with wilde hors he hide hem drawe,
 And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
 Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
 And after that, the abbot with his covent

Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynnd was holy
water,

And song — '*O Alma redemptoris mater!*'

This abbot, which that was an holy man ¹⁹⁰
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to coniure he bigan,
And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee,
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tell me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?'

'My throte is ent un-to my nekke-boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,
I sholde have deyed, ye, louge tyme agoon,
But Iesū Crist, as ye in bokes finde, ²⁰⁰
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
And, for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe "*O Alma*" loude and
clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to minde
This antem verrailly in my deyinge,
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had
songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my
tonge. ²¹⁰

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the
greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softly. ²²⁰
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres triklid doun as reyn,
And gnof he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
And after that they ryse, and forth ben
went,
And toke away this martir fro his bere,

And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete; ²³⁰
Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
With cursed Iewes, as it is notable,
For it was but a litel whyle ago;
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, god so merciabile
On us his grete mercy multiplie,
For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen.

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PREESTES TALE

'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-more
of this,

That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,
And mochel more; for litel heviness
Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I geesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet disese
Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and
ese,

To heren of hir sodeyn fal, alas!
And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,
As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat, ¹⁰
And ther abyde in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swich thing were goodly for to
telle.'

'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by Seint Ponles
belle,

Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he clappeth
loude,

He spak how "fortune covered with a
cloude"

I moot never what, and als of a "Tragedie"
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne, ²⁰
As ye han seyde, to here of heviness.

Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow
blesse!

Your tale anoyeth al this companye;
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye;
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.
Wherfor, sir Monk, or dau Piers by your
name,

I preye yow hertely, telle us somewhat
elles,

For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
That on your brydel hange on every syde,
By heven king, that for us alle dyde, ³⁰

I sholde er this han fallen down for slepe,
Although the slough had never been so
depe;

Than had your tale al be told in vayn.
For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
"Wher-as a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence."
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thing shal wel reported be.
Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow preye.
'Nay,' quod this monk, 'I have no lust to
pleye;

Now let another telle, as I have told.' 40
Than spak our host, with rude speche and
bold,

And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest anon,
'Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou sir
Iohn,
Tel us swich thing as may our hertes
glade,

Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a Iade.
What though thyn hors be bothe foule and
lene,

If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.'
'Yis, sir,' quod he, 'yis, host, so mote I
go,

But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed:' 50
And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
This swete preest, this goodly man, sir
Iohn.

Explicit

Here Biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chaunte- cleer and Pertelote

A POVRE widwe, somdel stape in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Byside a grove, standing in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf, 50
For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren
two.

Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte
Malle.

Ful sooty was hir bonr, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a selendre
meel.

Of poynnant sance hir neded never a deel.

No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir
throthe;

Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote. 70
Replecioun ne made hir never syk;
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exerceyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce,
Napoplexye shente nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
Hir bord was served most with whyt and
blak,

Milk and broun breed, in which she fond
no lak,

Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or
tweye,

For she was as it were a maner deye. 80
A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight Chaunte-
cleer,

In all the land of crowing nas his peer.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun; 90
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben
amended.

His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed, as it were a castel-wal.
His bile was blak, and as the leet it shoon;
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his ples-
saunce, 100

Whiche were his sustres and his para-
mours,

And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throthe
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so
faire,

Sin thilke day that she was seven night
old,

That trewely she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;
He loved hir so, that wel was him ther-
with. 110

But such a Ioye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,

In swete accord, 'my lief is faren in londe.'
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.

And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gromen in his
throthe, 120

As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him
rore,

She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,
What eytleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!'
And he answerde and seyde thus, 'madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By god, me mette I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore
afright.

Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche
aright, 130

And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withiune our yerde, wher-as I saugh a
beste,

Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad
areste

Upon my body, and wolde han had me
deed.

His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowering eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye; 140
This caused me my groning, doutelees.'

'Avoys!' quod she, 'fy on yow, herte-
lees!

Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
I can nat love a coward, by my feith.

For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool, 150
Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your
love,

That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenes?
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,

Whan humours been to habundant in a
wight.

Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-
night, 160

Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede colera, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here
dremes

Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek, and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take. 170
Of others humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.

Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes?
Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the
bemes,

For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye 180
Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your
prow;

And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun.

Ware the sonne in his ascencioun 190
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours
hote;

And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciare,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis,
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that
mery is; 200

Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete
hem in.

Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-more.'

'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy of
your lore.

But natheless, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he had no dremes for to drede.
By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee, 210
Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of loye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.'

Oon of the gretteste auctours that men
rede

Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente; 220
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage,
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle, 230
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.

And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye; 240
In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep;
Him thoughte his drem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyes in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now
slawe;

Bibold my bloddy woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde, 250
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;'
And tolde him every poynt how he was
slayn,

With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his drem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way; 260
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.

The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon,
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond, 270
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeance and Iustice of this felonye:—
'My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!'
What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn? 280
The peple out-sterste, and caste the cart to
grounde,

And in the middel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.

O blisful god, that art so Iust and trewe!
Lo, how that thou biwreyst mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable
To god, that is so Iust and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be; 289
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anon, ministres of that toun
Han bent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiler so sore engnyed,
That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anon,
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.

Here may men seen that dremes been to
drede.

And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe nat, so have I loye or blis,) 300
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as
hem leste.

Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir resta-

And casten hem ful erly for to saille;
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille. 310
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes
syde,

And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe
wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an
ende.'

He wook, and tolde his felawe what he
mette,

And preyde him his viage for to lette;
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde, 320
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful
faste.

'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte
agaste,

That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette nat a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and lapes.
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne
shal.

But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus for-aleuthen wilfully thy tyde, 330
God wot it reweth me; and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and wente his
way.

Buter that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it
eyled,

But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere, 340
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.

Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him expouned every del
His swene, and bad him for to kepe him
wel 350

For traisoun; but he nas but seven year
old,

And therefore lital tale hath he told

Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after seen. 360

And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.

Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egypt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,

Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Who-so wol seken aotes of sondry remes, 370
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.

Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde unhanged be?

Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
If thilke day be wente in-to bataille;
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte natbelees, 381

But he was slayn anon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del. 390

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al
this;

Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker as *In principio*,

Mulier est hominis confusio;
Madame, the sentence of this Latin is —
Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis. 400
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
I am so ful of Ioye and of solas
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.'
And with that word he fleyd doun fro the beem,

For it was day, and eek his hennas alle;
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd; 410
 He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
 And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
 He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
 And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
 Him deynd not to sette his foot to grounde.
 He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
 And after wol I telle his aventure. 420

Whan that the month in which the world
 bigan,
 That highte March, whan god first maked
 man,

Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
 Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
 That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat
 more;

And knew by kynde, and by noon other
 lore, 430

That it was pryme, and crew with blisful
 stevene.

'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on
 hevene

Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
 Herkneþ thise blisful briddes how they
 singe,

And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.

But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
 For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo.

God woot that worldly Ioye is sone ago; 440
 And if a rethor coude faire endyte,

He in a cronique sauþly mighte it wryte,
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee.

Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
 This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,

As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
 That women holde in ful gret reverence.

Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.

A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
 That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,

By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast, 451

The same night through-out the hegges brast
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;

And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
 Til it was passed undern of the day,
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
 As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
 That in awayt ligen to mordre men.
 O false mordre, lurking in thy den! 460
 O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
 False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
 That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
 That thou into that yerd flogh fro the
 bemes!

Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
 That thilke day was perilous to thee.

But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
 After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.

Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is, 470
 That in scole is gret altercacioun

In this matere, and greet disputacioun,
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.

But I ne can not bulke it to the bren,
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn,

Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
 Whether that goddes worthy forwiting

Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);

Or elles, if free choys be graunted me 480
 To do that same thiug, or do it noght,

Though god forwoot it, er that it was
 wroght;

Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
 But by necessitee condicionel.

I wol not han to do of swich matere;
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,

That took his counseil of his wyf, with
 sorwe,

To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met the dreem, that I yow

tolde.

Wommennes counsels been ful ofte colde;
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,

And made Adam fro paradys to go, 492
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.

But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese,
 If I counseil of women wolde blame,

Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich

matere,
 And what thay seyn of women ye may

here.
 Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat

myne;

I can noon harm of no womman divyne. 500

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,

Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see;
 For Physiologus seith aikerly,
 How that they singen wel and merily.
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yð,
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
 No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he
 sterte, 511

As man that was affrayed in his herte.
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
 Though he never erst had seyn it with his yð.
 This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him
 espye,

He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend, 520
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for tespye;
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe.
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
 As eny aungel hath, that is in hevене;
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
 Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.
 My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!)
 And eek your moder, of hir gentilesse, 530
 Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plesse.
 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
 So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
 As dide your fader in the morweninge;
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
 And for to make his voys the more strong,
 He wolde so payne him, that with bothe his
 yñ

He moete winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al, 541
 And streeche forth his nekke long and smal.
 And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
 That ther nas no man in no regioun
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
 I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Aase,
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
 Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,
 He made him for to lese his benefyce. 550
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee,

Iet see, conne ye your fader countrefete?'
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
 So was he ravissed with his flaterye.

Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
 Is in your courtes, and many a losen-
 geour, 560
 That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
 Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow
 seith.

Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
 Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.

This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his
 toos,
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen
 cloos,

And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
 And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
 And by the gargar hente Chauntecleer,
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
 For yet ne was ther no man that him
 sewed. 571

O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the
 bemes!

Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
 And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
 And in thy service dide al his power,
 More for delyt, than world to multiplie,
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to
 dye? 580

O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy king Richard was
 slayn

With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy
 lore,

The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude
 pleyne

For Chauntecleres drede, and for his
 peyne.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
 Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun 590
 Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite
 sword,

Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,
 And slayn him (as saith us Eneydos),
 As madeu alle the hennes in the clos,
 Whan they bad seyn of Chauntecleer the
 sighte.

But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,

Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend Car-
tage;

She was so ful of torment and of rage, 600
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hannes, right so cryden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wywes,
For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn:—

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres
two,

Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo, 610
And out at dores sterten they anon,
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weylaway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Ger-
land,

And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray
hogges

So were they fered for berking of the
dogges 620

And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
They rounne so, hem thoughte hir herte
breke.

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hye cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*
Certes, he lakke Straw, and his meynee,
Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming
kille, 630

As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay broghten bones, and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blew and
pouped,
And therewithal thay shryked and they
houped;

It semed as that heven sholde falle.
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!

Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak, 640

And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle!
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer
abyde;

I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.'—
The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be
don,'—

And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly, 650
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was
y-gon,

'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespass,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the
yerd;

But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
Com down, and I shal telle yow what I
mente.

I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe
two, 660

And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood
and bones,

If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yȝ.
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!'

'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him
meschaunce,

That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his
pees.'

Lo, swich it is for to be reccheless, 670
And negliget, and truste on flaterye.

But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men.
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be
stille.

Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good
men;

And bringe us to his heighe blisse.
Amen. 680

Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale

EDMUND SPENSER

THE FAERIE QUEENE

DISPOSED INTO TWELVE BOOKS,
FASHIONING

XII MORALL VERTUES

LONDON
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM PONSONBIE
1590

TO THE
MOST MIGHTIE AND
MAGNIFICENT EMPRESSE
ELIZABETH,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
QUEENE OF ENGLAND,
FRANCE AND IRELAND
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH &C.
HER MOST HUMBLE SERVANT:
ED. SPENSER

[Dedication of the edition of 1590.]

THE FIRST BOOKE
OF THE FAERIE QUEENE
CONTAYNING
THE LEGEND OF THE KNIGHT
OF THE RED CROSSE
OR
OF HOLINESSE

I

Lo! I the man, whose Muse whylome did
maske,
As time her taught, in lowly shephards
weeds,
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine oaten
reeds,
And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds

To blazon broade amongst her learned
throng:

Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall mor-
alize my song.

II

Helpe then, O holy virgin, chiefe of nyne,
Thy weaker novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden
still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so
much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my
dull tong.

III

And thou, most dreaded impe of highest
Iove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,
Lay now thy deadly heben bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine
ayde:
Come both, and with you bring triumphant
Mart,
In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murderous spoyles and bloudie rage
allayd.

IV

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly
bright,
Mirrour of grace and majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose
light
Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world
doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and
too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest
dread, a while.

CANTO I

The patrones of true Holiness
 Foule Errour doth defeate:
 Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
 Doth to his home entreate.

I

A GENTLE knight was pricking on the
 plaine,
 Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
 Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did
 remaine,
 The cruell markes of many' a bloody field;
 Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
 His angry steede did chide his foming
 bitt,
 As much disdainyng to the curbe to yield:
 Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did
 sitt,
 As one for knightly giusts and fierce en-
 counters fitt.

II

But on his brest a bloodie crosse he bore,
 The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
 For whose sweete sake that glorious badge
 he wore,
 And dead as living ever him ador'd:
 Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
 For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he
 had:
 Right faithfull true he was in deede and
 word,
 But of his cheere did seeme too solemne
 sad;
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was
 ydrad.

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
 That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
 That greatest glorious queene of Faery
 Lond,
 To winne him worshippe, and her grace to
 have,
 Which of all earthly thinges he most did
 crave;
 And ever as he rode his hart did earne
 To prove his puissance in battell brave
 Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
 Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne.

IV

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
 Upon a lowly asse more white then snow,

Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
 Under a velle, that wimpled was full low,
 And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
 As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
 And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow:
 Seemed in heart some hidden care she had;
 And by her in a line a milkewhite lambe
 she lad.

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
 She was in life and every vertuous lore,
 And by descent from royall lynage came
 Of ancient kinges and queenes, that had of
 yore
 Their scepters stretcht from east to west-
 erne shore,
 And all the world in their subjection held,
 Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
 Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:
 Whom to avenge, she had this knight from
 far compeld.

VI

Behind her farre away a dwarfe did lag,
 That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
 Or wearied with bearing of her bag
 Of needments at his backe. Thus as they
 past,
 The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
 And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
 Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
 That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain,
 And this faire couple eke to shroud them-
 selves were fain.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
 A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
 That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:
 Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers
 pride,
 Did spred so broad, that heavens light did
 hide,
 Not perceable with power of any starr:
 And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
 With footing worne, and leading inward
 farr:
 Faire harbour that them seemes, so in they
 entred ar.

VIII

And forth they passe, with pleasure for-
 ward led,
 Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,

Which, therein shrouded from the tempest
dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight
and hy,
The sayling pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-propp elme, the poplar never dry,
The builder oake, sole king of forrests all,
The aspine good for staves, the cypresse
funerall,

IX

The laurell, meed of mightie conquerours
And poets sage, the fire that weepeth still,
The willow worne of forlorne paramours,
The eugh obedient to the benders will,
The birch for shaftes, the sallow for the mill,
The mirrhe sweets bleeding in the bitter
wound,
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
The fruitfull olive, and the platane round,
The carver holme, the maple seeldom in-
ward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did
stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was
showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they nearest
weene,
That makes them doubt, their wits be not
their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take, in diverse
doubt they been.

XI

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take, that beaten seemd most
bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had
throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave,
Amid the thickest woods. The champion
stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser
brave,
And to the dwarfe a while his needlesse
spere he gave.

XII

'Be well aware,' quoth then that ladie milde,
'Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash pro-
voke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and
wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubt: oft fire is with-
out smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your
stroke,
Sir knight, with-hold, till further tryall
made.'
'Ah, ladie,' sayd he, 'shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light, through darke-
nesse for to wade.'

XIII

'Yea, but,' quoth she, 'the perill of this
place
I better wot then you; though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule dis-
grace,
Yet wisdomes warnes, whilest foot is in the
gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandering wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does
hate:
Therefore I read beware.' 'Fly, fly!' quoth
then
The fearefull dwarfe: 'this is no place for
living men.'

XIV

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull knight could not for ought
be staide,
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade,
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did womans shape re-
taine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile
disdaine.

XV

And as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes up-
wound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there
brod

A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisonous dugs, eachone
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill favored:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all
were gone.

XVI

Their dam upstart, out of her den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursed head, whose folds dis-
plaid
Were stretcht now forth at length with-
out entraile.

She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle,
Armed to point, sought backe to turne
again;

For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darknes to remaine,
Where plain none might her see, nor she
see any plaine.

XVII

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd, he
lept

As lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly
kept

From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce, her speckled taile ad-
vaunst,

Threatning her angrie sting, him to dis-
may:

Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand en-
haunst:

The stroke down from her head unto her
shoulder glaunst.

XVIII

Much daunted with that dint, her sence was
dazd,

Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered
round,

And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground:
Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne
arownd,

Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge
traine

All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in
vaine:

God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours
endlesse traine.

XIX

His lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, 'Now, now, sir knight, shew
what ye bee:

Add faith unto your force, and be not faint:
Strangle her, els she sure will strangle
thee.'

That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate for grieve and high dis-
daine;

And knitting all his force, got one hand free,
Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great
paine,

That soone to loose her wicked hands did
her constraine.

XX

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw
A flood of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets
raw,

Which stunk so vildly, that it forst him
slacke

His grasping hold, and from her turne him
backe:

Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes
did lacke,

And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthie parbreake all the place defiled
has.

XXI

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale,
His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:

But when his later spring gins to avale,
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherin
there breed

Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly
male

And partly femall, of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shaples elswher may
no man reed.

XXII

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, he can no lenger fight.

Whose corage when the feend perceivd to
shrinke,

She poured forth out of her bellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawnes of serpents
small,

Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as
inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did orall,
And him encombred sore, but could not
hurt at all.

XXIII

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper
best;

A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him mo-
lest,

All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can
rest,

But with his clowniah hands their tender
wings

He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their
murmurings.

XXIV

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of
shame

Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;
And stroke at her with more then manly
force,

That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft her hatefull heade without reinorse:
A streame of cole black blood forth gushed
from her corse.

XXV

Her scattred brood, soone as their parent
deare

They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groining full deadly, all with troublous feare,
Gathred themselves about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to have
found

At her wide mouth: but being there with-
stood,

They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked up their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her
hurt their good.

XXVI

That detestable sight him much amaze,
To see th' unkindly impea, of heaven ac-
curst,

Devoure their dam; on whom while so he
gazed,

Having all satisfide their bloody thirst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse
burst,

And bowels gushing forth: well worthy
end

Of such as drunke her life, the which them
nurst!

Now needeth him no lenger labour spend;
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom
he should contend.

XXVII

His lady, seeing all that chaunat, from
farre,

Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
And saide, 'Faire knight, borne under hap-
pie starre,

Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this
day,

And proov'd your strength on a strong eni-
mie,

Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed
it may.'

XXVIII

Then mounted he upon his steede againe,
And with the lady backward sought to wend;
That path he kept which beaten was most
plaine,

Ne ever would to any by way bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them
brought.

So forward on his way (with God to frend)
He passed forth, and new adventure sought:
Long way he traveled, before he heard of
ought.

XXIX

At length they chaunat to meet upon the
way

An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yelad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did
repent.

XXX

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courtesous
was;

And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did
pas.

'Ah! my dear sonne,' quoth he, 'how should,
alas!

Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such thinges
to mell.

XXXI

'But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie farre and
neare.'

'Of such,' saide he, 'I chiefly doe inquire,
And shall you well rewardes to shew the
place,

In which that wicked wight his dayes doth
weare:

For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a
space.'

XXXII

'Far hence,' quoth he, 'in wastfull wilder-
nesse,

His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great dis-
tresse.'

'Now,' saide the ladie, 'draweth toward
night,

And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forweared be: for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The Sunne, that measures heaven all day
long,

At night doth baite his steedes the ocean
waves emong.

XXXIII

'Then with the Sunne take, sir, your timely
rest,

And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell
best.'

'Right well, sir knight, ye have advised
bin,'

Quoth then that aged man; 'the way to win

Is wisely to advise: now day is spent;
Therefore with me ye may take up your in
For this same night.' The knight was well
content:

So with that godly father to his home they
went.

XXXIV

A litle lowly hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In travell to and froe: a litle wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and even-tyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled
forth alway.

XXXV

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment, where none
was:

Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their
will;

The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas:
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had
store,

And well could file his tongue as smooth
as glas:

He told of saintes and popes, and evermore
He strowd an Ave-Mary after and before.

XXXVI

The drouping night thus creepeth on them
fast,

And the sad humor loading their eye liddes,
As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep
them biddes:

Unto their lodgings then his guesstes he
riddes:

Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe
he findes,

He to his studie goes, and there amidde
His magick bookes and artes of sundrie
kinds,

He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble
sleepy minds.

XXXVII

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses
frame;

With which and other spelles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly dame,
And cursed heven, and spake reprochful
shame

Of highest God, the Lord of life and light:
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead
night,

At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put
to flight.

XXXVIII

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes
dredd

Legions of sprights, the which, like litle
flies

Fluttring about his ever damned hedd,
Awaite whereto their service he applyes,
To aide his friendes, or fray his enimies:

Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;
The one of them he gave a message too,
The other by him selfe staide, other worke
to doo.

XXXIX

He, making speedy way through spersed
ayre,

And through the world of waters wide and
deepe,

To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.

Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,

And low, where dawning day doth never
peepe,

His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet
bed

Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth
steepe

In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,

Whiles sad Night over him her mantle
black doth spred.

XL

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,

The one faire fram'd of burnisht yvory,

The other all with silver overcast;

And wakeful dogges before them farre doe
lye,

Watching to banish Care their enemy,

Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.

By them the sprite doth passe in quietly,

And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned
deepe

In drowse fit he findes: of nothing he
takes keepe.

XLI

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tum-
bling downe,

And ever drizzling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like
the sowne

Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swowne:
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t' annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard: but carelesse Quiet
lyes,

Wrapt in eternall silence farre from eni-
myes.

XLII

The messenger approaching to him spake,
But his waste wordes retourn'd to him in
vaine:

So sound he slept, that nought mought him
awake.

Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with
paine,

Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to
speake.

As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies
weake,

He mumbled soft, but would not all his
silence breake.

XLIII

The sprite then gan more boldly him to
wake,

And threatned unto him the dreaded name

Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,

And, lifting up his lompish head, with blame

Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.

'Hether,' quoth he, 'me Archimago sent,

He that the stubborne sprites can wisely
tame;

He bids thee to him send for his intent

A fit false dreame, that can delude the
sleepers sent.'

XLIV

The god obayde, and calling forth straight
way

A diverse dreame out of his prison darke,

Delivered it to him, and downe did lay

His heave head, devoide of careful carke;

Whose sences all were straight benumbd
and starke.

He, backe returning by the yvorie dore,

Remounted up as light as chearefull larke,
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast unto his lord, where he him left afore.

XLV

Who all this while, with charmes and hid-
den artes,
Had made a lady of that other spright,
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
So lively and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have raviht
quight:
The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for
Una fit.

XLVI

Now when that ydle dreame was to him
brought,
Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly, void of evil thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as he him schooled privily:
And that new creature, borne without her
dew,
Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under
feigned hew.

XLVII

Thus well instructed, to their worke they
haste,
And comming where the knight in slom-
ber lay,
The one upon his hardie head him plaste,
And made him dreame of loves and lust-
full play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy.
Then seemed him his lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged
boy
Her chaste hart had subdewd to learne
Dame Pleasures toy.

XLVIII

And she her selfe, of beautie soveraigne
queene,
Fayre Venus, seemde unto his bed to bring
Her, whom he, waking, evermore did weene
To bee the chastest flowre that aye did
spring

On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing
Hymen is Hymen, dauncing all around,
Whylst freshest Flora her with yvie girlond
crownd.

XLIX

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started up, as seeming to mistrust
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo ! there before his face his ladie is,
Under blacke stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely
looke,
Most like that virgin true, which for her
knight him took.

L

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce de-
spight;
But hastie heat tempring with sufferance
wise,
He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise
To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned
truth.
Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous
wise,
Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth,
Both for her noble blood, and for her
tender youth.

LI

And sayd, ' Ah sir, my liege lord and my
love,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven
above,
Or the blind god, that doth me thus amate,
For hoped love to winne me certaine hate ?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state
You, whom my hard avenging destinie
Hath made judge of my life or death in-
differently.

LII

' Your owne deare sake forst me at first to
leave
My fathers kingdom '—There she stopt
with teares;

Her swollen hart her speech seemd to be-
reave;
And then againe begonne: 'My weaker
yeares,
Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly
feares,
Fly to your fayth for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not die in languor and long teares.'
'Why, dame,' quoth he, 'what hath ye thus
dismayd?
What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort
me affrayd?'

LIII

'Love of your selfe,' she saide, 'and deare
constraint,
Lets me not sleepe, but waste the wearie
night
In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned
quight.'
Her doubtfull words made that redoubted
knight
Suspect her truth: yet since no' untruth he
knew,
Her fawning love with foule disdaine full
spight
He would not shend, but said, 'Deare dame,
I rew,
That for my sake unknowne such griefe
unto you grew,

LIV

'Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound;
Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse
smart,
Where cause is none, but to your rest de-
part.'
Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
Her mournfull plaintes, beguiled of her
art,
And fed with words, that could not chose
but please;
So slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her
case.

LV

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to thinke that gentle dame so
light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull wearines of former fight
Having yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,

That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse
his braine
With bowres, and beds, and ladies deare
delight:
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe re-
turnd againe.

CANTO II

The guilefull great enchanter parts
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire Falahood steps,
And workes him woefull ruth.

I

By this the northerne wagoner had set
His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast
starre,
That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from
farre
To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre:
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note
shrill
Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome
did fill:

II

When those accursed messengers of hell,
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged
spright,
Came to their wicked maister, and gan tel
Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeed-
ing night:
Who, all in rage to see his skilfull might
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine
And sad Proserpines wrath, them to af-
fright.
But when he saw his threatning was but
vaine,
He cast about, and searcht his baleful
bokes againe.

III

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,
And that false other spright, on whom he
spred
A seeming body of the subtile aire,
Like a young squire, in loves and lustyhed
His wanton daies that ever loosely led,
Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:
Those twoo he tooke, and in a secreete bed,

Covered with darkenes and misdeeming
night,
Them both together laid, to joy in vaine
delight.

IV

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull
hast
Unto his guest, who, after troublous sights
And dreames, gan now to take more sound
repat;
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearful
frights,
As one aghast with feends or damned
sprights,
And to him cals: 'Rise, rise, unhappy
swaine,
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked
wights
Have knit themselves in Venus shameful
chaine;
Come see, where your false lady doth her
honor staine.'

V

All in amaze he suddenly up start
With sword in hand, and with the old man
went;
Who soone him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely
ment
In wanton lust and lend embracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous
fire,
The eie of reason was with rage yblent,
And would have slaine them in his furious
ire,
But hardly was restrained of that aged
sire.

VI

Retourning to his bed in torment great,
And bitter anguish of his guilty sight,
He could not rest, but did his stout heart
eat,
And wast his inward gall with deepe de-
spight,
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring
night.
At last faire Hesperus in highest skie
Had spent his lampe, and brought forth
dawning light;
Then up he rose, and clad him hastily;
The dwarfe him brought his steed: so both
away do fly.

VII

Now when the rosy fingred Morning faire,
Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,
Had spred her purple robe through dewy
aire,
And the high hils Titan discovered,
The royall virgin shooke of drousyhed,
And rising forth out of her baser bowre,
Lookt for her knight, who far away was
fled,
And for her dwarfe, that wont to wait each
howre:
Then gan she wail and weepe, to see that
woeful stowre.

VIII

And after him she rode with so much
speede,
As her slowe beast could make; but all in
vaine:
For him so far had borne his light-foot
steede,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce dis-
daine,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;
Yet she her weary limbes would never rest,
But every hil and dale, each wood and
plaine,
Did search, sore grieved in her gentle breast,
He so ungently left her, whome she loved
best.

IX

But subtile Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandring in woods and forrests,
Th' end of his drift, he praised his divelish
arts,
That had such might over true meaning
harts:
Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth
make,
How he may worke unto her further smarts:
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure
take.

X

He then devise himselfe how to disguise;
For by his mighty science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming
wise,
As ever Proteus to himselfe could make:
Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,

That of himselfe he ofte for feare would
quake,
And off would flie away. O who can tell
The hidden powre of herbes, and might of
magick spel?

XI

But now seemde best, the person to put on
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
In mighty armes he was yclad anon,
And silver shield; upon his coward brest
A bloody crosse, and on his craven crest
A bounch of beares discoloured diversly:
Full jolly knight he seemde, and wel ad-
drest,
And when he sate upon his courser free,
Saint George himselfe ye would have
deemed him to be.

XII

But he, the knight whose semblaunt he did
beare,
The true Saint George, was wandred far
away,
Still flying from his thoughts and gealous
feare;
Will was his guide, and grieve led him
astray.
At last him chaunst to meete upon the way
A faithlesse Sarazin, all armed to point,
In whose great shield was writ with letters
gay
Some joy: full large of limbe and every joint
He was, and cared not for God or man a
point.

XIII

Hee had a faire companion of his way,
A goodly lady clad in scarlot red,
Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay;
And like a Persian mitre on her hed
Shee wore, with crowns and owches gar-
nished,
The which her lavish lovers to her gave:
Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bells and
bosses brave.

XIV

With faire disport and courting dalliaunce
Shee intertaine her lover all the way:
But when she saw the knight his speare
advance,
Shee some left of her mirth and wanton play,

And bad her knight addresse him to the
fray:
His foe was nigh at hand. He, pricke with
pride
And hope to winne his ladies hearte that
day,
Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers
side
The red bloud trickling stained the way, as
he did ride.

XV

The Knight of the Redcrosse, when him he
spide
Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,
Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards
ride:
Soone meete they both, both fell and furi-
ous,
That, daunted with theyr forces hideous,
Their steeds doe stagger, and amazed stand,
And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their owne
hand,
Doe backe rebutte, and ech to other yealdeth
land.

XVI

As when two rams, stird with ambitious
pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side
Doe meete, that, with the terror of the
shooke
Astonied, both stand sencelesse as a blocke,
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke,
Both staring fierce, and holding idely
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

XVII

The Sarazin, sore daunted with the buffe,
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him
flies;
Who well it wards, and quyteth cuff with
cuff:
Each others equall puissance envies,
And through their iron sides with cruell
spies
Does seeke to perce: repining courage yields
No foote to foe. The flashing fier flies,
As from a forge, out of their burning
shields,
And streams of purple bloud new dies the
verdant fielda.

XVIII

'Curse on that Crosse,' quoth then the Sarazin,
 'That keepes thy body from the bitter fitt!
 Dead long ygoe, I wote, thou haddest bin,
 Had not that charme from thee forwarnd itt:

But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,
 And hide thy head.' Therewith upon his crest

With rigor so outrageous he smitt,
 That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
 And glauncing downe his shield, from blame
 him fairely blest.

XIX

Who theareat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark

Of native vertue gan eftsoones revive,
 And at his haughty helmet making mark,
 So hugely stroke, that it the steels did rive,
 And cleft his head. He, tumbling downe alive,

With bloudy mouth his mother earth did kis,

Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost did strive

With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is,
 Whether the soules doe fly of men that live amis.

XX

The lady, when she saw her champion fall,
 Like the old ruines of a broken towre,
 Staid not to waile his woefull funerall,
 But from him fled away with all her powre;
 Who after her as hastily gan scowre,
 Bidding the dwarfe with him to bring away
 The Sarazins shield, signe of the conqueroure.

Her soone he overtooke, and bad to stay,
 For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

XXI

Shee, turning backe with ruefull countenance,

Cride, 'Mercy, mercy, sir, vouchsafe to shoue

On silly dame, subject to hard mischaunce,
 And to your mighty wil!' Her humblesse low,

In so rich weedes and seeming glorious show,

Did much emmove his stout heroicke heart,

And said, 'Deare dame, your suddain overthrow

Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,
 And tel, both who ye be, and who that tookes
 your part.'

XXII

Melting in teares, then gan shee thus lament:

'The wretched woman, whom unhappy howre
 Hath now made thrall to your commandement,

Before that angry heavens list to lowre,
 And Fortune false betraide me to your powre,

Was, (O what now availeth that I was?)
 Borne the sole daughter of an emperour,
 He that the wide west under his rule has,
 And high hath set his throne where Tiberis
 doth pas.

XXIII

'He, in the first flowre of my freshest age,
 Betrothed me unto the onely haire
 Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage;
 Was never prince so faithfull and so faire,
 Was never prince so meeke and debonaire;
 But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,
 My dearest lord fell from high honors staire,
 Into the hands of hys accursed fone,
 And cruelly was alaine, that shall I ever
 mone.

XXIV

'His blessed body, spoild of lively breath,
 Was afterward, I know not how, convaidd
 And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death

When tidings came to mee, unhappy maid,
 O how great sorrow my sad soule assaid!
 Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,
 And many yeares throughout the world I
 straid,

A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded mind
 With love, long time did languish as the
 stricken hind.

XXV

'At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin
 To meete me wandring; who perforce me led

With him away, but yet could never win
 The fort, that ladies hold in soveraigne
 dread.

There lies he now with foule dishonor dead,

Who, whiles he livde, was called proud
Sanafoy:

The eldest of three brethren, all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sansjoy,
And twixt them both was born the bloudy
bold Salsloy.

XXVI

'In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortunate,
Now miserable I Fidessa dwell,
Craving of you, in pittie of my state,
To doe none ill, if please ye not doe well.'
He in great passion al this while did dwell,
More busying his quicke eies, her face to
view,
Then his dull cares, to heare what shee did
tell;
And said, 'Faie lady, hart of flint would rew
The undeserved woes and sorrowes which
ye shew.

XXVII

'Henceforth in safe assurance may ye rest,
Having both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe, that did you molest:
Better new friend then an old foe is said.'
With chaunge of chear the seeming simple
maid
Let fal her eien, as shamefast, to the earth,
And yeelding soft, in that she nought gain-
said,
So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,
And shee coy lookes: so dainty, they say,
maketh dertth.

XXVIII

Long time they thus together traueiled,
Til, weary of their way, they came at last
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire
did spread
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse over-
cast,
And their greene leaves, trembling with
every blast,
Made a calme shadowe far in compasse
round:
The fearefull shepheard, often there aghast,
Under them never sat, ne wont there sound
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th' unlucky
ground.

XXIX

But this good knight, soone as he them can
see,
For the coole shade him thither hastily got:

For golden Phoebus, now ymounted hie,
From fiery wheeles of his faire chariot
Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot,
That living creature mote it not abide;
And his new lady it endured not.
There they alight, in hope themselves to
hide
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary
limbs a tide.

XXX

Faie seemely pleasaunce each to other
makes,
With goodly purposes, there as they sit:
And in his falsed fancy he her takes
To be the fairest wight that lived yit;
Which to expresse, he bends his gentle wit,
And thinking of those branches greene to
fraine
A girlond for her dainty forehead fit,
He pluckt a bough; out of whose rifte there
came
Smal drops of gory bloud, that trickled
down the same.

XXXI

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,
Crying, 'O spare with guilty hands to teare
My tender sides in this rough rynd embard;
But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for feare
Least to you hap that happened to me
heare,
And to this wretched lady, my deare love;
O too deare love, love bought with death
too deare!'
Astond he stood, and up his heare did
hove,
And with that suddein horror could no
member move.

XXXII

At last, whenas the dreadfull passion
Was overpast, and manhood well awake,
Yet musing at the straunge occasion,
And doubting much his sence, he thus be-
spake:
'What voice of damned ghost from Limbo
lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men doe oftentimes mis-
take,
Sends to my doubtful eares these speeches
rare,
And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse
blood to spare?'

XXXIII

Then groning deep: 'Nor damned ghost,'
 quoth he,
 'Nor guileful sprite to thee these words
 doth speake,
 But once a man, Fradubio, now a tree;
 Wretched man, wretched tree! whose nature
 weake
 A cruell witch, her cursed will to wreake,
 Hath thus transformd, and plast in open
 plaines,
 Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake,
 And scorching sunne does dry my secret
 vaines:
 For though a tree I seme, yet cold and heat
 me paines.'

XXXIV

'Say on, Fradubio, then, or man or tree,'
 Quoth then the knight; 'by whose mis-
 chievous arts
 Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see?
 He oft finds med'cine who his grieve im-
 parts;
 But double griefs afflict concealing harts,
 As raging flames who striveth to suppress.'
 'The author then,' said he, 'of all my smarta,
 Is one Duessa, a false sorceresse,
 That many errant knights hath brought to
 wretchednesse.'

XXXV

'In prime of youthly yeares, when corage
 hott
 The fire of love and joy of chevalree
 First kindled in my brest, it was my lott
 To love this gentle lady, whome ye see
 Now not a lady, but a seeming tree;
 With whome as once I rode accompanye,
 Me chaunced of a knight encountred bee,
 That had a like faire lady by his syde;
 Lyke a faire lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde.'

XXXVI

'Whose forged beauty he did take in hand
 All other dames to have exceded farre;
 I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
 Mine, that did then shine as the morning
 starre:
 So both to batteill fierce arraunged arre;
 In which his harder fortune was to fall
 Under my speare: such is the dye of warre:
 His lady, left as a prise martiall,
 Did yield her comely person, to be at my
 call.

XXXVII

'So doubly lov'd of ladies unlike faire,
 Th' one seeming such, the other such in-
 deede,
 One day in doubt I cast for to compare,
 Whether in beauties glorie did excede;
 A rosy girlond was the victors meede.
 Both seemde to win, and both seemde won
 to bee,
 So hard the discord was to be agreede:
 Fræliassa was as faire as faire mote bee,
 And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as
 shee.

XXXVIII

'The wicked witch, now seeing all this while
 The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway,
 What not by right, she cast to win by guile;
 And by her hellish science raid streight
 way
 A foggy mist, that overcast the day,
 And a dull blast, that, breathing on her face,
 Dimmed her former beauties shining ray,
 And with foule ugly forme did her dis-
 grace:
 Then was she fayre alone, when none was
 faire in place.'

XXXIX

'Then cride she out, "Fye, fye! deformed
 wight,
 Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth
 plaine
 To have before bewitched all mens sight;
 O leave her soone, or let her soone be
 slaine."
 Her loathly visage viewing with disdain,
 Eftsoones I thought her such as she me
 told,
 And would have kild her; but with faigned
 paine
 The false witch did my wrathfull hand
 with-hold:
 So left her, where she now is turnd to
 treen mould.'

XL

'Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my dame,
 And in the witch unweeting joyd long time,
 Ne ever wist but that she was the same:
 Till on a day (that day is everie prime,
 When witches wont do penance for their
 crime)
 I chaunst to see her in her proper hew.
 Bathing her selfe in origane and thyme:

A filthy foule old woman I did vew,
That ever to have toucht her I did deadly
rew.

XLI

'Herneather partes mishapen, monstrous,
Were hidd in water, that I could not see,
But they did seeme more foule and hide-
ous,

Then womans shape man would beleeve to
bee.

Thensforth from her most beastly com-
panie

I gan refraine, in minde to slipp away,
Soone as appeard safe opportunitie:
For danger great, if not assurd decay,
I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne
to stray.

XLII

'The delish hag, by chaunges of my cheare,
Perceiv'd my thought; and drown'd in sleepe
night,

With wicked herbes and oyntments did be-
smear

My body all, through charmes and magicke
might,

That all my senses were bereaved night:
Then brought she me into this desert waste,
And by my wretched lovers side me pight,
Where now enclod in wooden wals full
faste,

Banisht from living wights, our wearie
daies we waste.'

XLIII

'But how long time,' said then the Elfin
knight,

'Are you in this misformed hous to dwell?'

'We may not chaunge,' quoth he, 'this evill
pight

Till we be bathed in a living well;
That is the terme prescribed by the spell.'

'O how,' sayd he, 'mote I that well out find,
That may restore you to your wonted kynd?'

'Time and suffisid fates to former kynd
Shall us restore; none else from hence may
us unbynd.'

XLIV

The false Duesse, now Fidessa hight,
Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good
knight

Fall of sad feare and ghastly dreriment,

When all this speech the living tree had
spent,
The bleeding bough did thrust into the
ground,

That from the blood he might be innocent,
And with fresh clay did close the wooden
wound:

Then turning to his lady, dead with feare
her fownd.

XLV

Her seeming dead he fownd with feigned
feare,

As all unweeting of that well she knew,
And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare
Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eylyds
blew,

And dimmed sight, with pale and deadly hew,
At last she up gan lift: with trembling
cheare

Her up he tooke, too simple and too trew,
And oft her kist. At length, all passed feare
He set her on her steede, and forward
forth did beare.

CANTO III

Forsoaken Truth long seekes her love,
And makes the lyon mylde,
Marres Blind Devotions mart, and fals
In hand of leachour vyld.

I

NOUGHT is there under heav'ns wide hol-
lownesse,

That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretch-
ednesse

Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes
unkind:

I, whether lately through her brightnes
blynd,

Or through alleageance and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pittie I could
dy.

II

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my frayle eies these lines with teares
do steepe,

To thinke how she through guyleful hande-
ling,

Though true as touch, though daughter of
a king,

Though faire as ever living wight was fayre,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorced in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd to that vile
witches shayre.

III

Yet she, most faithfull ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
Far from all peoples preace, as in exile,
In wilderness and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who, subtilly betrayd
Through that late vision which th' en-
chaunter wrought,
Had her abandond. She, of nought affrayd,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily
sought;

Yet wished tydings none of him unto her
brought.

IV

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight,
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight:
From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside. Her angels face
As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly
grace.

V

It fortun'd, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lyon rushed suddainly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood:
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devour her tender course;
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And with the sight amazd, forgot his furi-
ous forse.

VI

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weat.
O how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!
Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked
long,

Her hart gan melt in great compassion,
And drizzling teares did shed for pure affec-
tion.

VII

'The lyon, lord of everie beast in field,'
Quoth she, 'his princely puissance doth
abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does
yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he, my lyon, and my noble lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the god of my life? why hath he me
abbord?'

VIII

Redounding teares did choke th' end of her
plaint,
Which softly echoed from the neighbour
wood;

And sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry
mood.

At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the virgin borne of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy palfrey got agayne,
To seeke her strayed champion if she might
attayne.

IX

The lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch
and ward,

And when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepard:
From her fayre eyes he tooke commande-
ment,

And ever by her lookes conceived her in-
tent.

X

Long she thus travell'd through deserts
wyde,

By which she thought her wandring knight
shold pass,

Yet never shew of living wight espyde;
Till that at length she found the troden gras,
In which the tract of peoples footing was,

Under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore:
The same she followes, till at last she has
A damzell spyde slow footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water
bore.

XI

To whom approching, she to her gan call,
To weet if dwelling place were nigh at hand;
But the rude wench her answerd nought
at all;
She could not heare, nor speake, nor under-
stand;
Till, seeing by her side the lyon stand,
With suddaine feare her pitcher downe she
threw,
And fled away: for never in that land
Face of fayre lady she before did vew,
And that dredd lyons looks her cast in
deadly hew.

XII

Full fast she fled, ne ever lookt behynd,
As if her life upon the wager lay,
And home she came, whereas her mother
blynd
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say,
But, suddaine catching hold, did her dis-
may
With quaking hands, and other signes of
feare:
Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray,
Gan shut the dore. By this arrived there
Dame Una, weary dame, and entrance did
requere.

XIII

Which when none yielded, her unruly page
With his rude clawes the wicket open rent,
And let her in; where, of his cruell rage
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonish-
ment,
Shee found them both in darke some corner
pent;
Where that old woman day and night did
pray
Upon her beads, devoutly penitent:
Nine hundred *Pater noster* every day,
And thrise nine hundred *Aves*, she was wont
to say.

XIV

And to augment her painefull penance
more,
Thrise every weeke in ashes shee did sitt,

And next her wrinkled skin rough sacke-
cloth wore,
And thrise three times did fast from any bitt:
But now for feare her beads she did for-
gett.

Whose needelesse dread for to remove away,
Faire Una framed words and count'naunce
fitt:

Which hardly doen, at length she gan them
pray

That in their cotage small that night she
rest her may.

XV

The day is spent, and commeth drowsie
night,

When every creature shrowded is in sleepe:
Sad Una downe her laies in weary plight,
And at her feete the lyon watch doth keepe:
In stead of rest, she does lament, and weepe
For the late losse of her deare loved knight,
And sighes, and grones, and evermore does
steepe

Her tender brest in bitter teares all night;
All night she thinks too long, and often
lookes for light.

XVI

Now when Aldeboran was mounted hye
Above the shinie Cassiopeias chaire,
And all in deadly sleepe did drowned lye,
One knocked at the dore, and in would fare;
He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware,
That ready entraunce was not at his call:
For on his backe a heavy load he bare
Of nightly stelths and pillage severall,
Which he had got abroad by purchas
criminall.

XVII

He was, to weete, a stout and sturdy thiefe,
Wont to robbe churches of their ornaments,
And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe,
Which given was to them for good intents;
The holy saints of their rich vestiments
He did disrobe, when all men carelesse slept,
And spoild the priests of their habiliments;
Whiles none the holy things in safety kept,
Then he by conning sleights in at the win-
dow crept.

XVIII

And all that he by right or wrong could
find
Unto this house he brought, and did bestow

Upon the daughter of this woman blind,
 Abessa, daughter of Corceca slow,
 With whom he whoredome usd, that few
 did know,
 And fed her fatt with feast of offerings,
 And plenty, which in all the land did grow;
 Ne spared he to give her gold and rings:
 And now he to her brought part of his
 stolen things.

XIX

Thus, long the dore with rage and threats
 he bett,
 Yet of those fearfull women none durst rize,
 (The lyon frayed them,) him in to lett:
 He would no lenger stay him to advize,
 But open breakes the dore in furious wize,
 And entring is; when that disdainfull beast,
 Encountering fierce, him suddein doth sur-
 prize,
 And seizing cruell clawes on trembling
 brest,
 Under his lordly foot him proudly hath sup-
 prest.

XX

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call,
 His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand;
 Who streight him rent in thousand peeces
 small,
 And quite dismembred hath: the thirsty
 land
 Dronke up his life; his corse left on the
 strand.
 His fearefull freends weare out the wofull
 night,
 Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand
 The heavie hap which on them is alight;
 Affraid, least to themselves the like mis-
 happen might.

XXI

Now when broad day the world discovered
 has,
 Up Una rose, up rose the lyon eke,
 And on their former journey forward pas,
 In waies unknowne, her wandring knight to
 seeke,
 With paines far passing that long wandring
 Greeke,
 That for his love refused deiteye;
 Such were the labours of this lady meeke,
 Still seeking him, that from her still did flye;
 Then furthest from her hope, when most
 she weened nye.

XXII

Soone as she parted thence, the fearfull
 twayne,
 That blind old woman and her daughter dear,
 Came forth, and finding Kirkrapine there
 slayne,
 For anguish great they gan to rend their
 heare,
 And beat their brests, and naked flesh to
 teare.
 And when they both had wept and wayld
 their fill,
 Then forth they ran like two amazed deare,
 Halfe mad through malice and revenging
 will,
 To follow her, that was the causer of their
 ill.

XXIII

Whome overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
 With hollow houlung and lamenting cry,
 Shamefully at her rayling all the way,
 And her accusing of dishonesty,
 That was the flowre of faith and chastity;
 And still, amidst her rayling, she did pray
 That plagues, and mischiefes, and long mis-
 ery
 Might fall on her, and follow all the way,
 And that in endlesse error she might ever
 stray.

XXIV

But when she saw her prayers nought pre-
 vaile,
 Shee backe retourned with some labour lost;
 And in the way, as shee did weepe and waile,
 A knight her mett in mighty armes embost,
 Yet knight was not for all his bragging
 bost,
 But subtill Archimag, that Una sought
 By traynes into new troubles to have toste:
 Of that old woman tidings he besought,
 If that of such a lady shee could tellen
 ought.

XXV

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
 And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her
 heare,
 Saying, that harlott she too lately knew,
 That caused her shed so many a bitter teare,
 And so forth told the story of her feare.
 Much seemed he to mone her haplesse
 chauce,
 And after for that lady did inquire;

Which being taught, he forward gan ad-
vance
His fair enchaunted steed, and eke his
charmed launce.

XXVI

Ere long he came where Una traveild slow,
And that wilde champion wayting her be-
syde:
Whome seeing such, for dread hee durst
not show
Him selfe too nigh at hand, but turned
wyde
Unto an hil; from whence when she him
spyde,
By his like seeming shield her knight by
name
Shee weend it was, and towards him gan
ride:
Approching nigh, she wist it was the same,
And with faire fearefull humblesse towards
him shee came;

XXVII

And weeping said, 'Ah! my long lacked
lord,
Where have ye bene thus long out of my
sight?
Much feared I to have bene quite abhord,
Or ought have done, that ye displeasen
might,
That should as death unto my deare heart
light:
For since mine eie your joyous sight did
mis,
My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse
night,
And eke my night of death the shadow
is;
But welcome now, my light, and shining
lampe of blis.'

XXVIII

He thereto meeting said, 'My dearest dame,
Far be it from your thought, and fro my
wil,
To thinke that knighthood I so much should
shame,
As you to leave, that have me loved stil,
And chose in Faery court, of meere good-
wil,
Where noblest knights were to be found
on earth:
The earth shall sooner leave her kindly
skil

To bring forth fruit, and make eternall
derth,
Then I leave you, my lief, yborn of
hevenly berth.

XXIX

'And sooth to say, why I left you so long,
Was for to seeke adventure in straunge
place,
Where Archimago said a felon strong
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;
But knight he now shall never more de-
face:
Good cause of mine excuse, that mote ye
please
Well to accept, and ever more embrace
My faithfull service, that by land and seas
Have vowd you to defend. Now then your
plaint appease.'

XXX

His lovely words her seemd due recom-
pence
Of all her passed paines: one loving howre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispen-
ce:
A dram of sweete is worth a pound of
sowre:
Shee has forgott how many a woeful stowre
For him she late endurd; she speakes no
more
Of past: true is, that true love hath no
powre
To looken backe; his eies be fixt before.
Before her stands her knight, for whom she
toyl'd so sore.

XXXI

Much like as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the ocean wide,
Ofte sount in swelling Tethys saltish teare,
And long time having tand his tawney hide
With blustering breath of heaven, that none
can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions
hound,
Soone as the port from far he has espide,
His chearfull whistle merily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates
him pledg around.

XXXII

Such joy made Una, when her knight she
found;
And eke th' enchaunter joyous seemde no
lesse

Then the glad marchant, that does vew
from ground

His ship far come from watrie wilderness;
He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth
blesse.

So forth they past, and all the way they
spent

Discoursing of her dreadful late distresse,
In which he askt her, what the lyon ment:
Who told her all that fell in journey, as she
went.

XXXIII

They had not ridden far, when they might
see

One pricking towards them with hastie heat,
Full strongly armed, and on a courser free,
That through his fiercenesse fomed all with
sweat,

And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to
threat

Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde;
And on his shield *Sans loy* in bloody lines
was dyde.

XXXIV

When nigh he drew unto this gentle payre,
And saw the red-crosse, which the knight
did beare,

He burnt in fire, and gan eftsoones prepare
Himselfe to battell with his couched speare.
Loth was that other, and did faint through
feare,

To taste th' untryed dint of deadly steele;
But yet his lady did so well him cheare,
That hope of new good hap he gan to feele;
So bent his speare, and spurd his horse
with yron heele.

XXXV

But that proud Paynim forward came so
ferce

And full of wrath, that with his sharphead
speare

Through vainly crossed shield he quite did
perce;

And had his staggering steed not shronke
for feare,

Through shield and body eke he should him
beare:

Yet so great was the puissance of his push,
That from his saddle quite he did him
beare:

He, tumbling rudely downe, to ground did
rush,

And from his gored wound a well of blond
did gush.

XXXVI

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,
He to him lept, in minde to reave his life,
And proudly said: 'Lo there the worthie
meed

Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife!
Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining
strife,

In peace may passen over Lethe lake,
When mourning altars, purgd with enimies
life,

The black infernall Furies doen aslake:
Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy
shall from thee take.'

XXXVII

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,
Till Una cride, 'O hold that heavie hand,
Deare sir, what ever that thou be in place!
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand:
Now at thy mercy: mercy not withstand:

For he is one the truest knight alive,
Though conquered now he lye on lowly
land,

And whilst him fortune favourd, fayre did
thrive

In bloody field: therefore of life him not
deprive.'

XXXVIII

Her piteous wordes might notabate his rage,
But, rudely rending up his helmet, would
Have slayne him straight: but when he sees
his age,

And hoarie head of Archimago old,
His hasty hand he doth amased hold,
And, halfe ashamed, wondred at the sight:
For that old man well knew he, though un-
told,

In charmes and magick to have wondrous
might;

Ne ever wont in field, ne in round lists, to
fight.

XXXIX

And said, 'Why, Archimago, lucklesse syre,
What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,
That hath thee hether brought to taste mine
yre?

Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,

In stead of foe to wound my friend amis ?
 He answered nought, but in a traunce still
 lay,
 And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his
 The cloude of death did sit. Which doen
 away,
 He left him lying so, ne would no lenger
 stay;

XL

But to the virgin comes; who all this while
 Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see
 By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,
 For so misfeigning her true knight to bee:
 Yet is she now in more perplexitie,
 Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,
 From whom her booteth not at all to flie;
 Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,
 Her from her palfrey pluckt, her visage to
 behold.

XLI

But her fiers servant, full of kingly aw
 And high disdain, whenas his soveraine
 dame
 So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
 With gaping jawes full greedy at him came,
 And, ramping on his shield, did weene the
 same
 Have reft away with his sharp rending
 clawes:
 But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
 His corage more, that from his griping
 pawes
 He hath his shield redeemd, and forth his
 sword he drawes.

XLII

O then too weake and feeble was the forse
 Of salvage beast, his puissance to with-
 stand:
 For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,
 As ever wielded speare in warlike hand,
 And feates of armes did wisely understand.
 Eftsoones he perced through his chaufed
 chest
 With thrilling point of deadly yron brand,
 And launcht his lordly hart: with death
 opprest
 He ror'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his
 stubborne brest.

XLIII

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid
 From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will ?

Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dis-
 maid,
 Her selfe a yielded pray to save or spill.
 He now, lord of the field, his pride to fill,
 With foule reproches and disdainful spight
 Her vildly entertaines, and, will or nill,
 Beares her away upon his courser light:
 Her prayers nought prevaile; his rage is
 more of might.

XLIV

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,
 And piteous plaintes, she filleth his dull
 cares,
 That stony hart could riven have in twaine,
 And all the way she wetts with flowing
 teares:
 But he, enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
 Her servile beast yet would not leave her
 so,
 But followes her far of, ne ought he feares,
 To be partaker of her wandring woe.
 More mild, in beastly kind, then that her
 beastly foe.

CANTO IV

To sinfull Hoos of Pryde Duessa
 Guydes the faithfull knight,
 Where, brothers death to wreak, Sanjoy
 Doth chaleng him to fight

I

YOUNG knight what ever, that dost armes
 professe,
 And through long labours hunttest after
 fame,
 Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
 In choice, and change, of thy deare loved
 dame,
 Least thou of her believe too lightly blame,
 And rash misweening doe thy hart remove:
 For unto knight there is no greater shame,
 Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love:
 That doth this Redcrosse Knights ensample
 plainly prove.

II

Who, after that he had faire Una lorne,
 Through light misdeeming of her loialtie,
 And false Duessa in her sted had borne,
 Called Fidess', and so supposd to be,
 Long with her traveld, till at last they see
 A goodly building, bravely garnished;
 The house of mightie prince it seemd to be;

And towards it a broad high way that led,
All bare through peoples feet, which thether
traveild.

III

Great troupes of people traveild thether-
ward

Both day and night, of each degree and
place;

But few returned, having scaped hard,
With balefull beggery, or foule disgrace;
Which ever after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay.
Thether Duesza badd him bend his pace:
For she is wearie of the toilsom way,
And also nich consumed is the lingring day.

IV

A stately pallace built of squared bricke,
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
Whose wals were high, but nothing strong
nor thick,

And golden foile all over them displaid,
That purest skye with brightnesse they dis-
maid:

High lifted up were many loftie towres,
And goodly galleries far over laid,
Full of faire windowes and delightful
bowres;

And on the top a dial told the timely
howrea.

V

It was a goodly heape for to behold,
And spake the praises of the workmans witt;
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
Did on so weake foundation ever sitt:
For on a sandie hill, that still did flitt
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,
That every breath of heaven shaken itt;
And all the hinder partes, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cun-
ningly.

VI

Arrived there, they passed in forth right;
For still to all the gates stood open wide:
Yet charge of them was to a porter hight,
Cald Malvenù, who entrance none denide:
Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight:
Infinite sortes of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wished sight
Of her, that was the lady of that pallace
bright.

VII

By them they passe, all gazing on them
round,

And to the presence mount; whose glorious
vew

Their frayle amazed senses did confound:
In living princes court none ever knew
Such endlesse richesse, and so sumptuous
shew;

Ne Persia selfe, the nourse of pompous
pride,

Like ever saw. And there a noble crew
Of lords and ladies stood on every side,
Which, with their presence fayre, the place
much beautifide.

VIII

High above all a cloth of state was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,
On which there sate, most brave embel-
lished

With royall robes and gorgeous array,
A mayden queene, that shone as Titans ray,
In glistring gold and perelesse pretious
stone;

Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious
throne,

As envying her selfe, that too exceeding
shone:

IX

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus fayrest childe,
That did presume his fathers fyrie wayne,
And flaming mouthes of steedes unwonted
wilde,

Through highest heaven with weaker hand
to rayne:

Proud of such glory and advancement vayne,
While flashing beames do daze his feeble
eyen,

He leaves the welkin way most beaten
playne,

And, rapt with whirling wheeles, inflames
the skyen

With fire not made to burne, but fayrely
for to shyne.

X

So proud she shyned in her princely state,
Looking to heaven, for earth she did dis-
dayne,

And sitting high, for lowly she did hate:
Lo! underneath her scornfull feete, was
layne

A dreadfull dragon with an hideous trayne,
And in her hand she held a mirrhour
bright,
Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,
And in her selfe-lov'd semblance tooke delight;
For she was wondrous faire; as any living
wight.

XI

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina, the queene of hell;
Yet did she thinke her pearelesse worth to
pas
That parentage, with pride so did she swell,
And thundring Jove, that high in heaven
doth dwell,
And wield the world, she claymed for her
syre,
Or if that any else did Jove excell:
For to the highest she did still aspyre,
Or, if ought higher were then that, did it
desyre.

XII

And proud Lucifera men did her call,
That made her selfe a queene, and crownd
to be;
Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all,
Ne heritage of native soveraintie,
But did usurpe with wrong and tyrannie
Upon the scepter, which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her realme with lawes, but pol-
licie,
And strong advizement of six wisards old,
That with their counsels bad her kingdome
did uphold.

XIII

Soone as the Elfin knight in presence came,
And false Duesse, seeming lady fayre,
A gentle husber, Vanitie by name,
Made rowme, and passage for them did pre-
paire:
So goodly brought them to the lowest stayre
Of her high throne, where they, on humble
knee
Making obeysaunce, did the cause declare,
Why they were come, her roiall state to see,
To prove the wide report of her great
majestee.

XIV

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so lowe,
She thancked them in her disdainfull wise,

Ne other grace vouchsafed them to shewe
Of princesses worthy; scarse them bad arise.
Her lordes and ladies all this while devise
Themselves to settin forth to straungers
sight:

Some frounce their curled heare in courtly
guise,
Some pranke their ruffes, and others trimly
dight
Their gay attyre: each others greater pride
does spight.

XV

Goodly they all that knight doe entertayne,
Right glad with him to have increast their
crew;
But to Duesse' each one himselfe did payne
All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew;
For in that court whylome her well they
knew:
Yet the stout Faery mongst the middest
crowd
Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly
vew,
And that great princessse too exceeding
prowd,
That to strange knight no better counte-
nance allowd.

XVI

Suddein upriseth from her stately place
The roiall dame, and for her coche doth call:
All hurtlen forth, and she, with princely
pace,
As faire Aurora, in her purple pall,
Out of the east the dawning day doth call,
So forth she comes: her brightnes brode
doth blaze:
The heapes of people, thronging in the hall,
Doe ride each other, upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand light doth all mens
eies amaze.

XVII

So forth she comes, and to her coche does
clyme,
Adorned all with gold and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime,
And strove to match, in roiall rich array,
Great Junoes golden chayre, the which, they
say,
The gods stand gazing on, when she does
ride
To Joves high hous through heavens bras-
paved way,

Drawne of fayre pecoocks, that excell in
pride,
And full of Argus eyes their tayles dis-
predden wide.

XVIII

But this was drawne of six unequall beasts,
On which her six sage counsellours did ryde,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kindes ap-
plyde:

Of which the first, that all the rest did
guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse, the nourse of sin;
Upon a slouthfull asse he chose to ryde,
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin,
Like to an holy monck, the service to begin.

XIX

And in his hand his portesse still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little
redd;

For of devotion he had little care,
Still drown'd in sleepe, and most of his
daies dedd:

Scarse could he once uphold his heavie hedd,
To looken whether it were night or day:
May seeme the wayne was very evill ledd,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not whether right he went, or
else astray.

XX

From worldly cares himselfe he did es-
loyne,

And greatly shunned manly exercise;
From everie worke he chalenged essoyne,
For contemplation sake: yet otherwise
His life he led in lawlesse riotise;
By which he grew to grievous malady;
For in his lustleasse limbs, through evill
guise,

A shaking fever raignd continually.
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this com-
pany.

XXI

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne:
His belly was upblowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne;
And like a crane his necke was long and
fyne,
With which he swallowd up excessive feast,
For want whereof poore people oft did pyne:

And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued up his gorge, that all did him
deteast.

XXII

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly
clad;

For other clothes he could not weare for
heat;

And on his head an yvie girland had,
From under which fast trickled downe the
sweat:

Still as he rode, he somewhat still did
eat,

And in his hand did beare a bouzing can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His drunken corse he scarce upholden can:
In shape and life more like a monster then
a man.

XXIII

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unhabile once to stirre or go;
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was
drowned so,

That from his frend he seeldome knew his
fo:

Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
And a dry dropsie through his flesh did
flow,

Which by misdiet daily greater grew.
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that
crew.

XXIV

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery
Upon a bearded gote, whose rugged beare,
And whally eies (the signe of geloey,)
Was like the person selfe, whom he did
beare:

Who rough, and blacke, and filthy, did ap-
peare,

Unseemely man to please faire ladies eye;
Yet he of ladies oft was loved deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O who does know the bent of womens fan-
tasy?

XXV

In a greene gowne he clothed was full
faire,

Which underneath did hide his filthinesse;
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies and new fanglenesse;

For he was false, and fraught with fickle-
nesse,
And learned had to love with secret lookes,
And well could daunce, and sing with rue-
fulnessse,
And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes,
And thousand other waies, to bait his
fleshy hookes.

XXVI

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw,
And lusted after all that he did love;
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But joyd weake womens hearts to tempt,
and prove
If from their loyall loves he might them
move;
Which lewdnes fild him with reprochfull pain
Of that foule evill, which all men reprove,
That rots the marrow, and consumes the
braine.
Such one was Lechery, the third of all this
traîne.

XXVII

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a camell loaden all with gold:
Two iron coffers hong on either side,
With precious metall full as they might hold,
And in his lap an heap of coine he told;
For of his wicked pelfe his god he made,
And unto hell him selfe for money sold:
Accused usury was all his trade;
And right and wrong ylike in equall bal-
lance waide.

XXVIII

His life was nigh unto deaths dore yplaste;
And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes, hee
ware,
Ne scarce good morsell all his life did taste,
But both from backe and belly still did
spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare;
Yet childe ne kinsman living had he none
To leave them to; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life, unto him selfe un-
knownne.

XXIX

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might
suffise,
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest
store,

Whose need had end, but no end covetise,
Whose welth was want, whose plenty made
him pore,

Who had enough, yett wished ever more,
A vile disease; and eke in foote and hand
A grievous gout tormented him full sore,
That well he could not touch, nor goe, nor
stand.

Such one was Avarice, the forth of this
faire band.

XXX

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Betweene his cankered teeth a venomous
tode,
That all the poison ran about his chaw;
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw
At neighbors welth, that made him ever sad;
For death it was, when any good he saw;
And wept, that cause of weeping none he
had;
But when he heard of harme, he waxed
wondrous glad.

XXXI

All in a kirtle of discoloured say
He clothed was, ypaynted full of eies;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull snake, the which his taile uptyes
In many folds, and mortall sting impyles.
Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
Those heapes of gold with griple Covetyse;
And grudged at the great felicitie
Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companee.

XXXII

He hated all good workes and vertuous
deeds,
And him no lesse, that any like did use;
And who with grations bread the hungry
feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse;
So every good to bad he doth abuse:
And eke the verse of famous poets witt
He does backebite, and spightfull poison
spues
From leproous mouth on all that ever writt.
Such one vile Envy was, that fift in row
did sitt.

XXXIII

And him beside rides fierce revenging
Wrath,
Upon a lion, loth for to be led;

And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed:
His eies did hurle forth sparles fiery red,
And stared sterne on all that him beheld:
As ashes pale of hew, and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, when choler
in him sweld.

XXXIV

His ruffin raiment all was staind with blood,
Which he had spilt, and all to rage yrent,
Through unadvised rashnes woxen wood;
For of his hands he had no government,
Ne car'd for blood in his avengement:
But when the furious fitt was overpast,
His cruell facts he often would repent;
Yet, wilfull man, he never would forecast,
How many mischieves should ensue his
heedlesse hast.

XXXV

Full many mischieves follow cruell Wrath;
Abhorred bloodahed, and tumultuous strife,
Unmanly murder, and unthrifty scath,
Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife,
And fretting grieve, the enemy of life:
All these, and many evils moe haunt Ire;
The swelling splene, and frenzy raging rife,
The shaking palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire.
Such one was Wrath, the last of this un-
godly tire.

XXXVI

And after all, upon the wagon beame,
Rode Sathan, with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesy
tame,

So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Showing for joy; and still before their
way

A foggy mist had covered all the land;
And underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculls and bones of men, whose life
had gone astray.

XXXVII

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open aire,
And in fresh flowring fields themselves to
sport.

Emongst the rest rode that false lady faire,
The foule Dueasa, next unto the chaire
Of proud Lucifer, as one of the traine:

But that good knight would not so nigh re-
paire,
Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce
vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfitt for war-
like swaine.

XXXVIII

So having solaced themselves a space,
With pleasure of the breathing fields
yfed,
They backe retourned to the princely place;
Whereas an exrant knight, in armes cyclod,
And heathnish shield, wherein with letters
red
Was writt *Sans joy*, they new arrived find:
Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardyhed,
He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts un-
kind,
And nourish bloody vengeance in his bit-
ter mind.

XXXIX

Who, when the shamed shield of alaine
Sansfoy
He spide with that same Fary champions
page,
Bewraying him that did of late destroy
His eldest brother, burning all with rage,
He to him lept, and that same envions gage
Of victors glory from him snatcht away:
But th' Elfin knight, which ought that war-
like wage,
Disdaind to loose the meed he womne in fray,
And him rencountring fierce, reakewd the
noble pray.

XL

Therewith they gan to hurtlen greedily,
Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne,
And clash their shields, and shake their
swords on hy,
That with their sturre they troubled all the
traine;
Till that great queene, upon eternall paine
Of high displeasure, that ensewen might,
Commaunded them their fury to refraine,
And if that either to that shield had right,
In equall lists they should the morrow next
it fight.

XLI

'Ah! dearest dame,' quoth then the Paynim
bold,
'Pardon the error of enraged wight,

Whome great grieve made forgett the raines
to hold

Of reasons rule, to see this recreaunt knight,
No knight, but treachour full of false de-
spight

And shameful treason, who through guile
hath slayn

The prouest knight that ever field did fight,
Even stout Sansfoy, (O who can then re-
frayn ?)

Whose shield he beares renverst, the more
to heap disdayn.

XLII

'And to augment the glorie of his guile,
His dearest love, the faire Fidessa, loe!
Is there possessed of the traytour vile,
Who reapes the harvest sown by his foe,
Sown in bloodie field, and bought with
woe:

That brothers hand shall dearely well re-
quight,

So be, O Queene, you equall favour showe.'
Him litle answerd th' angry Elfin knight;
He never meant with words, but swords, to
plead his right:

XLIII

But threw his gauntlet as a sacred pledg,
His cause in combat the next day to try:
So been they parted both, with harts on edg
To be aveng'd each on his enemy.

That night they pas in joy and jollity,
Feasting and courting both in bowre and
hall;

For steward was excessive Gluttony,
That of his plenty poured forth to all;
Which doen, the chamberlain Slowth did to
rest them call.

XLIV

Now whenas darkesome Night had all dis-
playd

Her coleblacke curtein over brightest skye,
The warlike youtbes, on dayntie couches
layd,

Did chase away sweet sleepe from slug-
gish eye,

To muse on meanes of hoped victory.
But whenas Morpheus had with leaden
mace

Arrested all that courtly company,
Uprose Duessa from her resting place,
And to the Paynims lodging comes with
silent pace.

XLV

Whom broad awake she findes, in trou-
blous fitt,

Forecasting, how his foe he might annoy,
And him amoves with speaches seeming fitt:

'Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy,
Cause of my new grieve, cause of my new
joy,

Joyous, to see his ymage in mine eye,
And greevd, to thinke how foe did him de-
stroy,

That was the flowre of grace and cheval-
rye;

Lo! his Fidessa, to thy secret faith I flye.'

XLVI

With gentle wordes he can her fayrely
greet,

And bad say on the secrete of her hart.
Then, sighing soft, 'I learne that litle sweet
Oft tempred is,' quoth she, 'with muchell
smart:

For since my brest was launcht with lovely
dart

Of deare Sansfoy, I never joyed howre,
But in eternall woes my weaker hart
Have wasted, loving him with all my powre,
And for his sake have felt full many an
heavie stowre.

XLVII

'At last, when perils all I weened past,
And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
Into new woes unweeting I was cast
By this false faytor, who unworthie ware
His worthie shield, whom he with guilefull
snare

Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull
grave.

Me, silly maid, away with him he bare,
And ever since hath kept in darksome cave,
For that I would not yeld that to Sansfoy
I gave.

XLVIII

'But since faire sunne hath sperst that
lowring clowd,

And to my loathed life now shewes some
light,

Under your beames I will me safely shrowd
From dreaded storme of his disdainfull
spight:

To you th' inheritance belongs by right
Of brothers prayse, to you eke longes his
love.

Let not his love, let not his restlesse spright,
Be unreveng'd, that calles to you above
From wandering Stygian shores, where it
doth endlesse move.'

XLIX

Thereto said he, 'Faيرة dame, be nought
dismaid
For sorrowes past; their grieve is with them
gone:

Ne yet of present perill be affraid:
For needlesse feare did never vantage none,
And helpelesse hap it booteth not to mone.
Dead is Sansfoy, his vitall paines are past,
Though grieved ghost for vengeance deep
do grone:

He lives, that shall him pay his dewties
last,
And guiltie Elfin blood shall sacrifice in
hast.'

L

'O! but I feare the fickle freakes,' quoth
ahee,

'Of Fortune false, and oddes of armes in
field.'

'Why, dame,' quoth he, 'what oddes can
ever bee,

Where both doe fight alike, to win or
yield?'

'Yea, but,' quoth she, 'he beares a charmed
shield,

And eke enchanted armes, that none can
perce,

Ne none can wound the man, that does
them wield.'

'Charmd or enchanted,' answerd he then
ferce,

'I no whitt reek, ne you the like need to
reherce.

LI

'But, faire Fidessa, sithens Fortunes guile,
Or enimies powre, hath now captived you,
Returne from whence ye came, and rest a
while,

Till morrow next, that I the Elfe subdew,
And with Sansfoyes dead dowry you en-
dew.'

'Ay me! that is a double death,' she said,
'With proud foes sight my sorrow to re-
new:

Where ever yet I be, my secrete aide
Shall follow you.' So, passing forth, she
him obaid.

CANTO V

The faithfull knight in equall field
Subdewes his faithlesse foe,
Whom false Duessa saves, and for
His cure to hell does goe.

I

THE noble hart, that harbours vertuous
thought,

And is with childe of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, untill it forth have brought
Th' eternall brood of glorie excellent:
Such restlesse passion did all night tor-
ment

The flaming courage of that Faery knight,
Devising how that doughtie tournament
With greatest honour he 'atchieven might:
Still did he wake, and still did watch for
dawning light.

II

At last, the golden orientall gate
Of greatest heaven gan to open fayre,
And Phoebus, fresh as brydegrome to his
mate,

Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie
hayre,
And hurld his glistring beams through
gloomy ayre.

Which when the wakeful Elfe perceivd,
streight way

He started up, and did him selfe prepayre
In sunbright armes, and battailous array:
For with that Pagan proud he combatt will
that day.

III

And forth he comes into the commune hall,
Where earely waite him many a gazing eye,
To weet what end to straunger knights may
fall.

There many minstrales maken melody,
To drive away the dull melancholy,
And many bards, that to the trembling
chord

Can tune their timely voices cunningly,
And many chroniclers, that can record
Old loves, and warres for ladies doen by
many a lord.

IV

Soone after comes the cruell Sarazin,
In woven maile all armed warily,
And sternly lookes at him, who not a pin
Does care for looke of living creatures eye.

They bring them wines of Greece and Araby
 And daintie spices fetcht from furthest
 Ynd,
 To kindle heat of corage privily:
 And in the wine a solemne oth they bynd
 T' observe the sacred lawes of armes, that
 are assynd.

V

At last forth comes that far renowned
 queene,
 With royall pomp and princely majestie:
 She is ybrought unto a paled greene,
 And placed under stately canapee,
 The warlike feates of both those knights
 to see.
 On th' other aide, in all mens open vew,
 Duessa placed is, and on a tree
 Sansfoy his shield is hangd with bloody
 hew:
 Both those, the lawrell girlonds to the vic-
 tor dew.

VI

A shrilling trompett sownded from on
 hye,
 And unto battaill bad them selves addresse:
 Their shiming shieldes about their wrestes
 they tye,
 And burning blades about their heades doe
 blesse,
 The instruments of wrath and heavinesse:
 With greedy force each other doth assayle,
 And strike so fiercely, that they doe im-
 presse
 Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle:
 The yron walles to ward their blowes are
 weak and fraile.

VII

The Sarazin was stout, and wondrous strong,
 And heaped blowes like yron hammers
 great:
 For after blood and vengeance he did long.
 The knight was fiers, and full of youthly
 beat,
 And doubled strokes, like dreaded thun-
 ders threat:
 For all for praise and honour he did fight.
 Both stricken stryke, and beaten both doe
 beat,
 That from their shields forth flyeth fire
 light,
 And helmets, hewen deepe, shew marks of
 eithers might.

VIII

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for
 right:
 As when a gryfon, seized of his pray,
 A dragon fiers encountreth in his flight,
 Through widest ayre making his ydle way,
 That would his rightfull ravine rend away:
 With hideous horror both together smight,
 And souce so sore, that they the heavens
 affray:
 The wise southsayer, seeing so sad sight,
 Th' amazed vulgar telles of warres and
 mortall fight.

IX

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for
 right,
 And each to deadly shame would drive his
 foe:
 The cruell steele so greedily doth bight
 In tender flesh, that streames of blood down
 flow,
 With which the armes, that earst so bright
 did show,
 Into a pure vermillion now are dyde.
 Great ruth in all the gazers harts did grow,
 Seeing the gored woundes to gape so wyde,
 That victory they dare not wish to either
 side.

X

At last the Paynim chaunst to cast his eye,
 His suddein eye, flaming with wrathfull
 fyre,
 Upon his brothers shield, which hong
 thereby:
 Therewith redoubled was his raging yre,
 And said: 'Ah, wretched sonne of wofull
 syre!
 Doest thou sit wayling by blacke Stygian
 lake,
 Whylest here thy shield is hangd for victo-
 rors hyre?
 And, sluggish german, doest thy forces slake
 To after-send his foe, that him may over-
 take?

XI

'Goe, caytive Elfe, him quickly overtake,
 And soone redeeme from his long wandring
 woe:
 Goe, guiltie ghost, to him my message make,
 That I his shield have quit from dying foe.'
 Therewith upon his crest he stroke him so,
 That twice he reeled, readie twice to fall:

End of the doubtfull battaile deemed tho
The lookers on, and lowd to him gan call
The false Duessa, 'Thine the shield, and I,
and all!'

XII

Soone as the Faerie heard his ladie speake,
Out of his sownning dreame he gan awake,
And quickning faith, that earst was woxen
weake,

The creeping deadly cold away did shake:
Tho, mov'd with wrath, and shame, and
ladies sake,

Of all attonce he cast avengd to be,
And with so' exceeding furie at him strake,
That forced him to stoupe upon his knee:
Had he not stouped so, he should have
cloven bee.

XIII

And to him said: 'Goe now, proud mis-
creant,

Thy selfe thy message do to german deare;
Alone he, wandering, thee too long doth want:
Goe say, his foe thy shield with his doth
beare.'

Therewith his heavie hand he high gan
reare,

Him to have slaine; when lo! a darke-
some clowd

Upon him fell: he no where doth appeare,
But vanisht is. The Elfe him calls alowd,
But answer none receives: the darknes him
does shrowd.

XIV

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running sayd: 'O prowrest
knight,

That ever ladie to her love did chose,
Let now abate the terrour of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despight
And bloodie vengeance; lo! th' infernall
powres,

Covering your foe with cloud of deadly
night,

Have borne him hence to Plutoes balefull
bowres.

The conquest yours, I yours, the shield and
glory yours!'

XV

Not all so satisfide, with greedy eye
He sought all round about, his thristy blade
To bathe in blood of faithlesse enemy;

Who all that while lay hid in secret shade:
He standes amazed, how he thence should
fade.

At last the trumpets triumph sound on hie,
And running heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victorie,
And to him brought the shield, the cause
of enmitie.

XVI

Wherewith he goeth to that soveraine
queene,

And falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his service seene:
Which she accepts, with thanks and goodly
gree,

Greatly advauncing his gay chevalree:
So marcheth home, and by her takes the
knight,

Whom all the people followe with great
glee,

Shouting, and clapping all their hands on
hight,

That all the ayre it fils, and flyes to heaven
bright.

XVII

Home is he brought, and layd in sump-
tuons bed:

Where many skilfull leaches him abide,
To salve his hurts, that yet still freshly
bled.

In wine and oyle they wash his woundes
wide,

And softly can embalme on everie side.

And all the while, most heavenly melody
About the bed sweet musicke did divide,

Him to beguile of grieve and agony:
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

XVIII

As when a wearie traveller, that strayes
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed
Nile,

Unweeting of the perillous wandering wayes,
Doth meete a cruell craftie crocodile,

Which, in false grieve hyding his harmefull
guile,

Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender
teares:

The foolish man, that pitties all this while
His mournefull plight, is swallowd up un-
wares,

Forgetfull of his owne, that mindes an
others cares.

XIX

So wept Duessa untill eventyde,
That shyning lampes in Joves high house
were light:
Then forth she rose, ne lenger would abide,
But comes unto the place, where th' he-
then knight,
In slombring awownd, nigh voyd of vitall
spright,
Lay cover'd with inchaunted cloud all day:
Whom when she found, as she him left in
plight,
To wayle his wofull case she would not stay,
But to the easterne coast of heaven makes
speedy way:

XX

Where grisely Night, with visage deadly
sad,
That Phœbus chearefull face durst never
vew,
And in a foule blacke pitchy mantle clad,
She findes forth comming from her dark-
some mew,
Where she all day did hide her hated hew.
Before the dore her yron charret stood,
Already harnessed for journey new;
And coleblacke steedes yborne of hellish
brood,
That on their rusty bits did champ, as they
were wood.

XXI

Who when she saw Duessa sunny bright,
Adorn'd with gold and jewels shining cleare,
She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th' unacquainted light began to feare;
For never did such brightnes there appeare;
And would have backe retyred to her cave,
Untill the witches speach she gan to heare,
Saying: 'Yet, O thou dreaded dame, I
crave
Abye, till I have told the message which
I have.'

XXII

She stayd, and fourth Duessa gan proceede:
'O thou most auncient grandmother of all,
More old then Jove, whom thou at first
didst breede,
Or that great house of gods cælestiall,
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgons hall,
And sawst the secrets of the world unmade,
Why suffrest thou thy nephewes deare to
fall

With Elfin sword, most shamefully betrade?
Lo where the stout Sansjoy doth sleepe in
deadly shade!

XXIII

'And him before, I saw with bitter eyes
The bold Sansfoy shrinck underneath his
speare;
And now the pray of fowles in field he lyes,
Nor wayld of friends, nor layd on groning
beare,
That whylome was to me too dearly deare.
O what of gods then boots it to be borne,
If old Aveugles sonnes so evill heare?
Or who shall not great Nightes children
scorne,
When two of three her nephews are so
fowle forlorne?

XXIV

'Up, then! up, dreary dame, of darknes
queene!
Go gather up the reliques of thy race,
Or else goe them avenge, and let be seene
That dreaded Night in brightest day hath
place,
And can the children of fayre Light de-
face?
Her feeling speeches some compassion
mov'd
In hart, and chaunge in that great mothers
face:
Yet pittie in her hart was never prov'd
Till then: for evermore she hated, never
lov'd:

XXV

And said, 'Deare daughter, rightly may I
rew
The fall of famous children borne of mee,
And good successes, which their foes en-
sew:
But who can turne the streame of destinee,
Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee,
Which fast is tyde to Joves eternall seat?
The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see,
And by my ruines thinkes to make them
great:
To make one great by others losse is bad
excheat.

XXVI

'Yet shall they not escape so freely all;
For some shall pay the price of others guilt:
And he, the man that made Sansfoy to fall,

Shall with his owne blood price that he
hath spilt.

But what art thou, that telst of nephews
kilt ?'

'I, that do seeme not I, Duessa ame,'

Quoth she, 'how ever now, in garments
gilt

And gorgeous gold arayd, I to thee came;
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and
Shame.'

XXVII

Then bowing downe her aged backe, she
kist

The wicked witch, saying: 'In that fayre
face

The false resemblance of Deceipt, I wist,
Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarce in darksome place
Could it discerne, though I the mother bee
Of Falshood, and roote of Duessaes race.

O welcome, child, whom I have longd to
see,

And now have scene unwares! Lo, now I
goe with thee.'

XXVIII

Then to her yron wagon she betakes,
And with her beares the fowle welfavoured
witch:

Through mirkesome aire her ready way
she makes.

Her twyfold teme, of which two blacke as
pitch,

And two were browne, yet each to each
unlich,

Did softly swim away, ne ever stamp,
Unlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths
to twitch;

Then foming tarre, their bridles they would
champ,

And trampling the fine element, would
fiercelly ramp.

XXIX

So well they sped, that they be come at
length

Unto the place, whereas the Paynim lay,
Devoid of outward sence and native strength,
Coverd with charmed cloud from vew of day
And sight of men, since his late luckelesse
fray.

His cruell wounds, with cruddy bloud con-
geald,

They binden up so wisely as they may,

And handle softly, till they can be heald:
So lay him in her charett, close in night
conceald.

XXX

And all the while she stood upon the ground,
The wakefull dogs did never cease to bay,
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound,
With which her yron wheelles did them
affray,

And her darke griesly looke them much
dismay:

The messenger of death, the ghastly owle,
With drery shriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry wolves continually did howle
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.

XXXI

Thence turning backe in silence softely they
stole,

And brought the heavy corse with easy pace
To yawning gulfe of deepe Avernus hole.

By that same hole an entraunce, darke and
bace,

With smoake and sulphur hiding all the
place,

Descends to hell: there creature never past,
That backe retourned without heavenly
grace;

But dreadfull Furies, which their chaines
have brast,

And damned sprights sent forth to make
ill men aghast.

XXXII

By that same way the direfull dames doe
drive

Their mournfull charett, fild with rusty
blood,

And downe to Plutoes house are come
bilive:

Which passing through, on every side them
stood

The trembling ghosts with sad amazed
mood,

Chattring their iron teeth, and staring wide
With stony eies; and all the hellish brood
Of feends infernall flockt on every side,
To gaze on earthly wight, that with the
Night durst ride.

XXXIII

They pas the bitter waves of Acheron,
Where many soules sit wailing woefully.
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,

Whereas the damned ghosts in torments
fry,
And with sharp shrilling shriekes doe boot-
lesse cry,
Cursing high Iove, the which them thither
sent.

The house of endlesse paine is built thereby,
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment
The cursed creatures doe eternally torment.

XXXIV

Before the threshold dreadfull Cerberus
His three deformed heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand adders venomous,
And killed forth his bloody flaming tong:
At them he gan to reare his bristles strong,
And felly gnarre, untill Dayes enemy
Did him appease; then downe his taile he
hong,
And suffered them to passen quietly:
For she in hell and heaven had power
equally.

XXXV

There was Ixion turned on a wheele,
For daring tempt the queene of heaven to
sin;
And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reele
Against an hill, ne might from labour lin;
There thrifty Tantalus hong by the chin;
And Tityus fed a vultur on his maw;
Typhæus joynts were stretched on a gin;
Theseus condemned to endlesse slouth by
law;
And fifty sisters water in leke vessels draw.

XXXVI

They all, beholding worldly wights in place,
Leave off their worke, unmindfull of their
smart,
To gaze on them; who forth by them doe
pace,
Till they be come unto the furthest part:
Where was a cave ywrought by wondrous
art,
Deepe, darke, uneasy, dolefull, comfort-
lesse,
In which and Aesculapius far apart
Emprisond was in chaines remediesse,
For that Hippolytus rent corse he did re-
dresse.

XXXVII

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was,
That went in charett chace the foming bore;

He all his peeres in beauty did surpas,
But ladies love, as losse of time, forbore:
His wanton stepdame loved him the more;
But when she saw her offred sweets re-
fusd,
Her love she turnd to hate, and him before
His father fierce of treason false accusd,
And with her gealous termes his open eares
abusd.

XXXVIII

Who, all in rage, his sea-god syre besought,
Some cursed vengeance on his sonne to
cast:
From surging gulf two monsters streight
were brought,
With dread whereof his chacing steedes
aghast
Both charett swifte and huntsman overcast.
His goodly corpe, on ragged cliffs yrent,
Was quite dismembred, and his members
chast
Scattered on every mountaine as he went,
That of Hippolytus was lefte no monument.

XXXIX

His cruell stepdame, seeing what was donne,
Her wicked daies with wretched knife did
end,
In death avowing th' innocence of her sonne:
Which hearing, his rash syre began to rend
His heare, and hasty tong, that did offend:
Tho, gathering up the relicks of his smart,
By Dianas meanes, who was Hippolyts frend,
Them brought to Aesculape, that by his art
Did heale them all againe, and joynd every
part.

XL

Such wondrous science in mans witt to rain
When Iove avizd, that could the dead re-
vive,
And fates expired could renew again,
Of endlesse life he might him not deprive,
But unto hell did thrust him downe alive,
With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore:
Where long remaining, he did alwaies strive
Him selfe with salves to health for to restore,
And slake the heavenly fire, that ragd
evermore.

XLI

There auncient Night arriving, did alight
From her nigh weary wayne, and in her
armes

To *Æsculapius* brought the wounded knight:
Whome having softly disaraid of armes,
Tho gan to him discover all his harmes,
Beseeching him with prayer, and with

praise,
If either salves, or oyles, or herbes, or
charmcs

A fordonne wight from dore of death mote
raise,

He would at her request prolong her
nephews daies.

XLII

'Ah! dame,' quoth he, 'thou temptest me
in vaine

To dare the thing, which daily yet I rew,
And the old cause of my continued paine
With like attempt to like end to renew.

Is not enough, that, thrust from heaven
dew,

Here endlesse penance for one fault I pay,
But that redoubled crime with vengeance
new

Thou biddest me to ecke? Can Night de-
fray

The wrath of thundring Jove, that rules
both Night and Day?'

XLIII

'Not so,' quoth she; 'but sith that heavens
king

From hope of heaven hath thee excluded
quight,

Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for
thing,

And fearest not that more thee hurten
might,

Now in the powre of everlasting Night?
Goe to then, O thou far renowned sonne
Of great Apollo, shew thy famous might
In medicine, that els hath to thee wonne
Great pains, and greater praise, both never
to be donne.'

XLIV

Her words prevaild: and then the learned
leach

His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
And all things els, the which his art did
teach:

Which having seene, from thence arose
away

The mother of dredd darkenesse, and let
stay

Aveugles sonne there in the leaches cure,

And backe retourning, tooke her wonted
way

To runne her timely race, whilst *Phoebus*
pure

In westerne waves his weary wagon did
recure.

XLV

The false *Duessa*, leaving noyous Night,
Returnd to stately pallace of Dame Pryde;
Where when she came, she found the Faery
knight

Departed thence, albee his woundes wyde,
Not thoroughly heald, unready were to ryde.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away;

For on a day his wary dwarfe had spyde
Where, in a dungeon deepe, huge numbers
lay

Of caytive wretched thralls, that wayled
night and day:

XLVI

A ruefull sight as could be seene with eie:
Of whom he learned had in secret wise

The hidden cause of their captivitye;
How mortgaging their lives to Covetise,

Through wastfull pride and wanton riotise,
They were by law of that proud tyrann-
nesse,

Provokt with Wrath, and Envyes false sur-
mise,

Condemned to that dongeon mercilesse,
Where they should live in wo, and dyo in
wretchednesse.

XLVII

There was that great proud king of Baby-
lon,

That would compell all nations to adore,
And him as onely God to call upon,

Till, through celestiallyl doome thrown out
of dore,

Into an oxe he was transformd of yore:
There also was King *Croesus*, that enhaunst

His hart too high through his great richesse
store;

And proud *Antiochus*, the which advaunst
His cursed hand gainst God, and on his
altares daunst.

XLVIII

And, them long time before, great *Nimrod*
was,

That first the world with sword and fire
warrayd;

And after him old Ninus far did pas
In princely pomp, of all the world obeyd;
There also was that mightie monarch layd
Low under all, yet above all in pride,
That name of native syre did fowle up-
brayd,
And would as Ammons sonne be magnifide,
Till, scorn'd of God and man, a shamefull
death he dide.

XLIX

All these together in one heape were
throwne,
Like carcases of beastes in butchers stall.
And, in another corner, wide were strowne
The antique ruins of the Romanes fall:
Great Romulus, the grandsyre of them
all,
Proud Tarquin, and too lordly Lentulus,
Stout Scipio, and stubborn Hanniball,
Ambitious Sylla, and sterne Marius,
High Caesar, great Pompey, and fiers An-
tonius.

L

Amongst these mightie men were wemen
mixt,
Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their
yoke:
The bold Semiramis, whose sides, transfixt
With sonnes own blade, her fowle reproches
spoke;
Fayre Sthenobee, that her selfe did choke
With willfull chorde, for wanting of her
will;
High minded Cleopatra, that with stroke
Of aspes sting her selfe did stontly kill:
And thousands moe the like, that did that
dongeon fill.

LI

Besides the endlesse routes of wretched
thralles,
Which thether were assembled day by day,
From all the world, after their wofull falles
Through wicked pride and wasted welthes
decay.
But most, of all which in that dongeon lay,
Fell from high princes courtes, or ladies
bowres,
Where they in ydle pomp, or wanton play,
Consumed had their goods, and thriftlesse
bowres,
And lastly thrown themselves into these
heavy stowres.

LII

Whose case whenas the carefull dwarfe had
tould,
And made ensample of their mournfull
sight
Unto his maister, he no lenger would
There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
But earely rose, and ere that dawning light
Discovered had the world to heaven wyde,
He by a privy posterne tooke his flight,
That of no envious eyes he mote be spyde:
For doubtlesse death ensewed, if any him
descryde.

LIII

Scarse could he footing find in that fowle
way,
For many corse, like a great lay-stall,
Of murdered men, which therein strowed
lay,
Without remorse or decent funerall:
Which al through that great princesse pride
did fall
And came to shamefull end. And them
besyde,
Forth ryding underneath the castell wall,
A donghill of dead carcases he spyde,
The dreadfull spectacle of that sad House
of Pryde.

CANTO VI

From lawlesse lust by wondrous grace
Fayre Una is releast:
Whom salvage nation does adore,
And learns her wise behest.

I

As when a ship, that flies fayre under sayle,
An hidden rocke escaped hath unwares,
That lay in waite her wrack for to bewaile,
The marriner, yet halfe amazed, stares
At perill past, and yet in doubt ne dares
To joy at his foolhappie oversight:
So doubly is distrest twixt joy and cares
The dreadlesse corage of this Elfin knight,
Having escapt so sad ensamples in his sight.

II

Yet sad he was, that his too hastie speed
The fayre Duesse had forst him leave be-
hind;
And yet more sad, that Una, his deare dreed,
Her truth had staynd with treason so un-
kind:
Yet cryme in her could never creature find,

But for his love, and for her own selfe sake,
She wandred had from one to other Ynd,
Him for to seeke, ne ever would forsake,
Till her unwares the fiers Sansloy did over-
take.

III

Who, after Archimagoes fowle defeat,
Led her away into a forest wilde,
And turning wrathfull fyre to lustfull heat,
With beastly sin thought her to have de-
filde,

And made the vassall of his pleasures vilde.
Yet first he cast by treatie, and by traynes,
Her to persuaue that stubborne fort to yilde:
For greater conquest of hard love he gaynes,
That workes it to his will, then he that it
constraines.

IV

With fawning wordes he courted her a
while,

And, looking lovely and oft sighing sore,
Her constant hart did tempt with diuerse
guile:

But wordes, and lookes, and sighes she
did abhorre,

As rock of diamond stedfast evermore.

Yet for to feed his fyrie lustfull eye,
He snatcht the vele that hong her face be-
fore:

Then gan her beautie shyne as brightest
skye,

And burnt his beastly hart t' efforce her
chastitye.

V

So when he saw his flatt'ring artes to fayle,
And subtile engines bett from batteree,
With greedy force he gan the fort assaile,
Whereof he weend possessed soone to bee,
And win rich spoile of ransackt chastitee.

Ah! heavens, that doe this hideous act be-
hold,

And heavenly virgin thus outraged see,
How can ye vengeance just so long with-
hold,

And hurle not flashing flames upon that
Paynim bold?

VI

The pitteous mayden, carefull comfort-
lesse,

Does throw out thrilling shriekes, and
shrieking cryes,

The last vaine helpe of wemens great dis-
treasse,
And with loud plaintes importuneth the
skyes;

That molten starres doe drop like weeping
eyes,

And Phœbus, flying so most shamefull sight,
His blushing face in foggy cloud implies,
And hydes for shame. What witt of mortall
wight

Can now devise to quitt a thrall from such
a plight?

VII

Eternall Providence, exceeding thought,
Where none appeares can make her selfe a
way:

A wondrous way it for this lady wrought,
From lyons clawes to pluck the gryp'd
pray.

Her shrill outcryes and shrieks so loud did
bray,

That all the woodes and forestes did re-
sownd;

A troupe of Faunes and Satyres far a way
Within the wood were dauncing in a rownd,
Whiles old Sylvanus slept in shady arber
sownd.

VIII

Who, when they heard that pitteous strained
voice,

In haste forsooke their rurall meriment,
And ran towards the far rebownded noyce,
To weet what wight so loudly did lament.

Unto the place they come incontinent:
Whom when the raging Sarazin espyde,

A rude, mishapen, monstrous rablement,
Whose like he never saw, he durst not hyde,
But got his ready steed, and fast away gan
ryde.

IX

The wyld woodgoda, arrived in the place,
There find the virgin doolfull desolate,
With ruffled rayments, and fayre blubbred
face,

As her outrageous foe had left her late,
And trembling yet through feare of former
hate.

All stand amazed at so uncoouth sight,
And gin to pittie her unhappie state;
All stand astonied at her beautie bright,
In their rude eyes unworthy of so wofull
plight.

X

She, more amazd, in double dread doth dwell;

And every tender part for feare does shake:
As when a greedy wolfe, through hunger fell,

A seely lamb far from the flock does take,
Of whom he meanes his bloody feast to make,

A lyon spyes fast running towards him,
The innocent pray in hast he does forsake,
Which, quitt from death, yet quakes in every lim

With chaunge of feare, to see the lyon looke so grim.

XI

Such fearefull fitt assaid her trembling hart,
Ne word to speake, ne joynt to move, she had:

The salvage nation feele her secret smart,
And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad:
Their frowning forheades, with rough hornes yclad,

And rustick horror, all a syde doe lay,
And, gently grenning, shew a semblance glad

To comfort her, and, feare to put away,
Their backward bent knees teach her humbly to obay.

XII

The doubtfull damzell dare not yet committ

Her single person to their barbarous truth,
But still twixt feare and hope amazd does sitt,

Late leard what harme to hasty trust ensu'th:

They, in compassion of her tender youth,
And wonder of her beautie soverayne,
Are wonne with pittie and unwonted ruth,
And all prostrate upon the lowly playne,
Doe kisse her feete, and fawne on her with count'nance fayne.

XIII

Their harts she ghesseeth by their humble guise,

And yeldes her to extremitie of time;
So from the ground she fearelesse doth arise,
And walketh forth without suspect of crime:
They all as glad as birdes of joyous pryme,
Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round,

Shouting, and singing all a shepheards ryme;
And, with greene branches strowing all the ground,

Do worship her as queene with olive gir-lond croud.

XIV

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,

That all the woods with doubled eccho ring,
And with their horned feet doe weare the ground,

Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring.
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring;
Who with the noyse awaked, commeth out
To weete the cause, his weake steps govern-
ing

And aged limbs on cypresse stadle stout;
And with an yvie twyne his waste is girt about.

XV

Far off he wonders what them makes so glad,

Or Bacchus merry fruit they did invent,
Or Cybeles frantiecke rites have made them mad.

They, drawing nigh, unto their god present
That flowre of fayth and beautie excellent:
The god himselfe, vewing that mirrhour rare,

Stood long amazd, and burnt in his intent:
His owne fayre Dryope now he thinkes not faire,

And Pholoe fowle, when her to this he doth compaire.

XVI

The woodborne people flat before her flat,
And worship her as goddesses of the wood;
And old Sylvanus selfe bethinkes not, what
To thinke of wight so fayre, but gazing stood,

In doubt to deeme her borne of earthly brood:

Sometimes Dame Venus selfe he seemes to see,

But Venus never had so sober mood;
Sometimes Diana he her takes to be,
But misseeth bow, and shaftes, and buskins to her knee.

XVII

By vew of her he ginneth to revive
His ancient love, and dearest Cyparisse

And calles to mind his pourtraiture alive,
How fayre he was, and yet not fayre to this;
And how he slew with glauncing dart amisse
A gentle hynd, the which the lovely boy
Did love as life, above all worldly blisse;
For grieve whereof the lad n'ould after joy,
But pynd away in anguish and selfewild
annoy.

XVIII

The wooddy nymphes, faire Hamadryades,
Her to behold do thether runne apace,
And all the troupe of light-foot Naiades
Flocke all about to see her lovely face:
But when they vewed have her heavenly
grace,
They envy her in their malicious mind,
And fly away for feare of fowle disgrace:
But all the Satyres scorue their woody kind,
And henceforth nothing faire, but her, on
earth they find.

XIX

Clad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky
mayd
Did her content to please their feeble eyes,
And long time with that salvage people
stayd,
To gather breath in many miseries.
During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
To teach them truth, which worshipt her in
vaine,
And made her th' image of idolatryes;
But when their bootlesse zeale she did re-
strayne
From her own worship, they her asse
would worship fayn.

XX

It fortun'd, a noble warlike knight
By just occasion to that forrest came,
To seeke his kindred, and the lignage right,
From whence he tooke his wel-deserved
name:
He had in armes abroad wonne muchell
fame,
And fild far landes with glorie of his might;
Plaine, faithfull, true, and enemy of shame,
And ever lov'd to fight for ladies right,
But in vaine glorious frayes he litle did
delight.

XXI

A Satyres sonne yborne in forrest wyld,
By straunge adventure as it did betyde,

And there begotten of a lady myld,
Fayre Thyamis the daughter of Labryde,
That was in sacred bandes of wedlocke
tyde

To Therion, a loose unruly swayne,
Who had more joy to raunge the forrest
wyde,
And chase the salvage beast with busie
payne,
Then serve his ladies love, and waste in
pleasures vayne.

XXII

The forlorne mayd did with loves longing
burne,
And could not lacke her lovers company,
But to the wood she goes, to serve her
turne,
And seeke her spouse, that from her still
does fly,
And followes other game and venery.
A Satyre chaunst her wandring for to finde,
And kindling coles of lust in brutish eye,
The loyall linkes of wedlocke did unbinde,
And made her person thrall unto his
beastly kind.

XXIII

So long in secret cabin there he held
Her captive to his sensuall desyre,
Till that with timely fruit her belly sweld,
And bore a boy unto that salvage syre:
Then home he suffred her for to retyre,
For ransome leaving him the late-borne
childe;
Whom, till to ryper yeares he gan aspyre,
He noused up in life and manners wilde,
Emongst wild beastes and woods, from
lawes of men exile.

XXIV

For all he taught the tender ymp was but
To banish cowardize and bastard feare:
His trembling hand he would him force to
put
Upon the lyon and the rugged beare,
And from the she beares teats her whelps to
teare;
And eke wyld roring buls he would him
make
To tame, and ryde their backes not made
to beare;
And the robuckes in flight to overtake:
That everie beast for feare of him did fly
and quake.

XXV

Thereby so fearelesse and so fell he grew,
That his owne syre and maister of his guise
Did often tremble at his horrid vew,
And oft, for dread of hurt, would him advise
The angry beastes not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to provoke: for he would
learne

The lyon stoup to him in lowly wise,
(A lesson hard) and make the libbard sterne
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge
did earne.

XXVI

And for to make his powre approved more,
Wyld beastes in yron yokes he would com-
pell;

The spotted panther, and the tusked bore,
The pardale swift, and the tigre cruell,
The antelope, and wolfe both fiers and fell;
And them constraine in equall teme to
draw.

Such joy he had their stubborne harts to
quell,

And sturdie courage tame with dreadfull aw,
That his beheast they feared, as a tyrans
law.

XXVII

His loving mother came upon a day
Unto the woodes, to see her little sonne;
And chaunst unwares to meet him in the
way,

After his sportes and cruell pastime donne,
When after him a lyonesse did runne,
That roaring all with rage, did lowd requere
Her children deare, whom he away had
wonne:

The lyon whelpes she saw how he did beare,
And lull in rugged armes, withouten child-
ish feare.

XXVIII

The fearefull dame all quaked at the sight,
And turning hacke gan fast to fly away,
Untill, with love revokt from vaine affright,
She hardly yet perswaded was to stay,
And then to him these womanish words gan
say:

'Ah! Satyrane, my dearling and my joy,
For love of me leave off this dreadfull
play;

To dally thus with death is no fit toy:
Go find some other play-fellowes, mine own
sweet boy.'

XXIX

In these and like delightes of bloody game
He trayned was, till ryper yeares he raught;
And there abode, whylst any beast of name
Walkt in that forrest, whom he had not taught
To feare his force: and then his courage
haught

Desyrd of forreine foemen to be knowne,
And far abroad for straunge adventures
sought:

In which his might was never overthrowne,
But through al Faery Lond his famous
worth was blown.

XXX

Yet evermore it was his maner faire,
After long labours and adventures spent,
Unto those native woods for to repaire,
To see his syre and ofspring auncient.
And now he thether came for like intent;
Where he unwares the fairest Una found,
Straunge lady, in so straunge habiliment,
Teaching the Satyres, which her sat around,
Trew sacred lore, which from her sweet
lips did redound.

XXXI

He wondred at her wisdoms heavenly rare,
Whose like in womens witt he never knew;
And when her curteous deeds he did com-
pare,

Gan her admire, and her sad sorrowes rew,
Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles
threw,

And joyd to make prooffe of her cruelty
On gentle dame, so hurtlesse and so trew:
Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,
And leard her discipline of faith and verity.

XXXII

But she, all vowd unto the Redcrosse Knight,
His wandring perill closely did lament,
Ne in this new acquaintance could delight,
But her deare heart with anguish did tor-
ment,

And all her witt in secret counsels spent,
How to escape. At last in privy wise
To Satyrane she shewed her intent;
Who, glad to gain such favour, gan devise,
How with that pensive maid he best might
thence arise.

XXXIII

So on a day, when Satyres all were gone
To doe their service to Sylvanus old,

The gentle virgin, left behinde alone,
 He led away with corage stout and bold.
 Too late it was to Satyres to be told,
 Or ever hope recover her againe:
 In vaine he seekes that, having, cannot hold.
 So fast he carried her with carefull paine,
 That they the wods are past, and come
 now to the plaine.

XXXIV

The better part now of the lingring day
 They traveld had, whenas they far espide
 A weary wight forwandring by the way,
 And towards him they gan in hast to ride,
 To weste of newes that did abroad betide,
 Or tidings of her Knight of the Redcrosse.
 But he, them spying, gan to turne aside
 For feare, as seemd, or for some feigned
 losse:
 More greedy they of newes fast towards
 him do crosse.

XXXV

A silly man, in simple weeds forwornde,
 And soild with dust of the long dried way;
 His sandales were with toilsome travell
 torne,
 And face all tand with scorching sunny ray,
 As he had traveld many a sommers day
 Through boyling sands of Arabie and Ynde;
 And in his hand a Jacobs staffe, to stay
 His weary limbs upon; and eke behind
 His scrip did hang, in which his needments
 he did bind.

XXXVI

The knight, approching nigh, of him inquerd
 Tidings of warre, and of adventures new;
 But warres, nor new adventures, none he
 herd.

Then Una gan to aske, if ought he knew
 Or heard abroad of that her champion trew,
 That in his armour bare a croslet red.

'Ay me! deare dame,' quoth he, 'well may
 I rew

To tell the sad sight which mine eies have
 red:

These eies did see that knight both living
 and eke ded.'

XXXVII

That cruell word her tender hart so thrild,
 That sudden cold did ronne through every
 vaine,
 And stony horreur all her sences fild

With dying fitt, that downe she fell for
 paine.

The knight her lightly reared up againe,
 And comforted with curteous kind reliefe:
 Then, wonne from death, she bad him tellen
 plaine

The further processe of her hidden griefe;
 The lesser pangs can beare, who hath en-
 dur'd the chief.

XXXVIII

Then gan the pilgrim thus: 'I chaunst this
 day,
 This fatall day, that shall I ever rew,
 To see two knights in travell on my way
 (A sory sight) arraung'd in battaill new,
 Both breathing vengeaunce, both of wrath-
 full hew:

My feareful flesh did tremble at their strife,
 To see their blades so greedily imbrow,
 That, dronke with blood, yet thirsted after
 life:

What more? the Redcrosse Knight was
 slain with Paynim knife.'

XXXIX

'Ah, dearest Lord!' quoth she, 'how might
 that bee,

And he the stoutest knight, that ever
 wonne?'

'Ah, dearest dame,' quoth hee, 'how might
 I see

The thing, that might not be, and yet was
 donne?'

'Where is,' said Satyrane, 'that Paynims
 sonne,

That him of life, and us of joy, hath reft?'

'Not far away,' quoth he, 'he hence doth
 wonne,

Foreby a fountaine, where I late him lefte
 Washing his bloody wounds, that through
 the steele were cleft.'

XL

Therewith the knight thence marched forth
 in hast,

Whiles Una, with huge heavinesse oppress,
 Could not for sorrow follow him so fast;
 And soone he came, as he the place had
 ghest,

Whereas that Pagan proud him selfe did
 rest

In secret shadow by a fountaine side:
 Even he it was, that earst would have sup-
 preat

Faire Una: whom when Satyrane espide,
With foule reprochfull words he boldly him
deside;

XLI

And said: 'Arise, thou cursed miscreant,
That hast with knightlesse guile and trech-
erous train
Faire knighthood fowly shamed, and doest
vaunt
That good Knight of the Redcrosse to have
slain:

Arise, and with like treason now maintain
Thy guilty wrong, or els thee guilty yield.'
The Sarazin, this hearing, rose amain,
And catching up in hast his three square
shield
And shining helmet, soone him buckled to
the field;

XLII

And, drawing nigh him, said: 'Ah, mis-
born Elfe!
In evill houre thy foes thee hither sent,
Anothers wrongs to wreak upon thy selfe:
Yet ill thou blamest me, for having blent
My name with guile and traiterous intent:
That Redcrosse Knight, perdie, I never
slew;
But had he beene where earst his armes
were lent,
Th' enchanter vaine his errour should not
rew:
But thou his errour shalt, I hope, now
proven trew.'

XLIII

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell,
To thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile
Each other, bent his enemy to quell;
That with their force they perst both plate
and maile,
And made wide furrowes in their fleshs
fraile,
That it would pittie any living eie.
Large floods of blood adowne their sides did
raile;
But floods of blood could not them satisfie:
Both hongred after death: both chose to
win, or die.

XLIV

So long they fight, and fell revenge pursue,
That, fainting each, them selves to breathe
lett,

And, ofte refreshed, battell oft renue:
As when two bores, with rancling malice
mett,
Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely frett,
Til breathlesse both them selves aside retire,
Where, foming wrath, their cruell tuskes
they whett,
And trample th' earth, the whiles they may
respire;
Then backe to fight againe, new breathed
and entire.

XLV

So fiersly, when these knights had breathed
once,
They gan to fight retourne, increasing more
Their puissant force and cruell rage at-
tonce,
With heaped strokes more hugely then be-
fore,
That with their drery wounds and bloody
gore
They both deformed, scarsely could bee
known.
By this, sad Una fraught with anguish sore,
Led with their noise, which through the
aire was thrown,
Arriv'd, wher they in erth their fruitles
blood had sown.

XLVI

Whom all so soone as that proud Sarazin
Espide, he gan revive the memory
Of his leud lusts, and late attempted sin,
And lefte the doubtfull battell hastily,
To catch her, newly offred to his eie:
But Satyrane, with strokes him turning,
staid,
And sternely bad him other businesse
plie
Then hunt the steps of pure unspotted
maid:
Wherewith he al enrag'd, these bitter
speeches said:

XLVII

'O foolish Faeries sonne! what fury mad
Hath thee inoent to hast thy dolefull
fate?
Were it not better I that lady had
Then that thou hadst repented it too late?
Most sencelesse man he, that himselfe doth
hate,
To love another. Lo then, for thine ayd,
Here take thy lovers token on thy pate.'

So they two fight; the whiles the royall
mayd
Fledd farre away, of that proud Paynim
sore afrayd.

XLVIII

But that false pilgrim, which that leasing
told,
Being in deed old Archimage, did stay
In secret shadow, all this to behold,
And much rejoyced in their bloody fray:
But when he saw the damsell passe away,
He left his stond, and her pursewd apace,
In hope to bring her to her last decay.
But for to tell her lamentable cace,
And eke this battels end, will need another
place.

CANTO VII

The Redcrosse Knight is captive made,
By gyaunt proud opprest:
Prince Arthure meets with Una great-
ly with those newes distrest.

I

WHAT man so wise, what earthly witt so
ware,
As to discry the crafty cunning traine,
By which Deceipt doth maske in visour
faire,
And cast her coulours died deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well
can faine,
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine?
Great maistresse of her art was that false
dame,
The false Duessea, cloked with Fidessaes
name.

II

Who when, returning from the drery Night,
She fownd not in that perilous Hous of
Pryde,
Where she had left, the noble Redcross
Knight,
Her hoped pray, she would no lenger byde,
But forth she went to seeke him far and
wide.
Ere long she fownd, whereas he wearie
sate
To rest him selfe, foreby a fountaine syde,
Disarmed all of yron-coted plate,
And by his side his steed the grassy forage
ate.

III

Hee feedes upon the cooling shade, and
bayes
His sweatie forehead in the breathing wynd,
Which through the trembling leaves full
gently playes,
Wherein the chearefull birds of sundry
kynd
Doe chaunt sweet musick, to delight his
mynd.
The witch approaching gan him fayrely
greet,
And with reproch of carelesnes unkynd
Upbrayd, for leaving her in place unmeet,
With fowle words tempring faire, soure
gall with hony sweet.

IV

Unkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat,
And bathe in pleasaunce of the joyous
shade,
Which shielded them against the boyling
heat,
And, with greene boughes decking a
gloomy glade,
About the fountaine like a girlond made;
Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well,
Ne ever would through fervent sommer
fade:
The sacred nymph, which therein wont to
dwell,
Was out of Dianes favor, as it then befell.

V

The cause was this: one day when Phoebe
fayre
With all her band was following the chace
This nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of
scorching ayre,
Satt downe to rest in midst of the race:
The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace
And badd the waters, which from her di
flow,
Be such as she her selfe was then in place
Thenceforth her waters waxed dull and
slow,
And all that drunke thereof did faint and
feeble grow.

VI

Hereof this gentle knight unweeting was,
And lying downe upon the sandie graile,
Dronke of the streame, as cleare as christal
glas:
Eftsoones his manly forces gan to fayle,

And mightie strong was turnd to feeble
 frayle:
 His chaunged powres at first them selves
 not felt,
 Till crudled cold his corage gan assaile,
 And chearefull blood in fayntnes chill did
 melt,
 Which, like a fever fit, through all his body
 swelt.

VII

Yet goodly court he made still to his dame,
 Poured out in loosenesse on the grassy
 ground,
 Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:
 Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd,
 Which through the wood loud bellowing
 did rebownd,
 That all the earth for terror seemd to
 shake,
 And trees did tremble. Th' Elfe, therewith
 astownd,
 Upstartd lightly from his looser make,
 And his unready weapons gan in hand to
 take.

VIII

But ere he could his armour on him dight,
 Or gett his shield, his monstrous enemy
 With sturdie steps came stalking in his
 sight,
 An hideous geaunt, horrible and hye,
 That with his tallnesse seemd to threat the
 skye;
 The ground ake groned under him for dread:
 His living like saw never living eye,
 Ne durst behold: his stature did exceed
 The height of thre the tallest sonnes of
 mortall seed.

IX

The greatest Earth his uncouth mother
 was,
 And blustering Æolus his boasted syre;
 Who with his breath, which through the
 world doth pas,
 Her hollow womb did secretly inspyre,
 And fild her hidden caves with stormie yre,
 That she conceiv'd; and trebling the dew
 time,
 In which the wombes of women doe expyre,
 Brought forth this monstrous masse of
 earthly slyme,
 Puft up with emptie wynd, and fild with
 sinfull cryme.

X

So growen great, through arrogant delight
 Of th' high descent whereof he was yborne,
 And through presumption of his matchlesse
 might,
 All other powres and knighthood he did
 scorne.
 Such now he marcheth to this man forlorne,
 And left to losse: his stalking steps are
 stayde
 Upon a snaggy oke, which he had torne
 Out of his mothers bowelles, and it made
 His mortall mace, wherewith his foemen
 he dismayde.

XI

That when the knight he spyde, he gan ad-
 vance
 With huge force and insupportable mayne,
 And towards him with dreadfull fury
 prounce;
 Who haplesse, and eke hopelesse, all in
 vaine
 Did to him pace, sad battaile to darrayne,
 Disarmd, disgraste, and inwardly dismayde,
 And eke so faint in every joynt and vayne,
 Through that fraile fountain, which him
 feeble made,
 That scarcely could he weeld his bootlesse
 single blade.

XII

The geaunt strooke so maynly mercilesse,
 That could have overthrowne a stony towre,
 And were not heavenly grace, that him did
 blesse,
 He had beene pouldred all, as thin as flowre:
 But he was wary of that deadly stowre,
 And lightly lept from underneath the blow:
 Yet so exceeding was the villeins powre
 That with the winde it did him overthrow,
 And all his sences stoond, that still he lay
 full low.

XIII

As when that divelish yron engin, wrought
 In deepest hell, and framd by furies skill,
 With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,
 And ramd with bollet rownd, ordaind to
 kill,
 Conceiveth fyre, the heavens it doth fill
 With thundring noyse, and all the ayre doth
 choke,
 That none can breath, nor see, nor heare at
 will,

Through smouldry cloud of duskish stinck-
ing smok,
That th' onely breath him daunts, who hath
escapt the stroke.

XIV

So daunted when the geaunt saw the knight,
His heavie hand he heaved up on hye,
And him to dust thought to have battred
quight,
Untill Duessa loud to him gan crye,
'O great Orgoglio, greatest under skye,
O hold thy mortall hand for ladies sake!
Hold for my sake, and doe him not to dye,
But vanquisht thine eternall bondslave
make,
And me, thy worthy meed, unto thy leman
take.'

XV

He hearkned, and did stay from further
harmes,
To gayne so goodly guerdon as she spake:
So willingly she came into his armes,
Who her as willingly to grace did take,
And was possessed of his newfound make.
Then up he tooke the slombred sencelease
corse,
And ere he could out of his swowne awake,
Him to his castle brought with hastie forse,
And in a dongeon deep him threw without
remorse.

XVI

From that day forth Duessa was his deare,
And highly honourd in his haughtie eye;
He gave her gold and purple pall to weare,
And triple crowne set on her head full hye,
And her endowd with royall majesty:
Then, for to make her dreaded more of
men,
And peoples hartes with awfull terror tye,
A monstrous beast ybredd in filthy fen
He chose, which he had kept long time in
darksom den.

XVII

Such one it was, as that renowned snake
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,
Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake,
Whose many heades out budding ever new
Did breed nim endlesse labor to subdew:
But this same monster much more ugly
was;
For seven great heads out of his body grew,

An yron brest, and back of scaly brae,
And all embrewd in blood, his eyes did
shine as glas.

XVIII

His tayle was stretched out in wondrous
length,
That to the hous of heavenly gods it raught,
And with extorted powre, and borrow'd
strength,
The everburning lamps from thence it
braught,
And proudly threw to ground, as things of
naught;
And underneath his filthy feet did tread
The sacred thinges, and holy heastes fore-
taught.
Upon this dreadfull beast with sevenfold
head
He sett the false Duessa, for more aw and
dread.

XIX

The wofull dwarfe, which saw his maisters
fall,
Whiles he had keeping of his grasing steed,
And valiant knight become a caytive thrall,
When all was past, tooke up his forlorne
weed;
His mightie armour, missing most at need;
His silver shield, now idle maisterlesse;
His poynant speare, that many made to
bleed;
The ruefull monuments of heavinessse;
And with them all departes, to tell his
great distresse.

XX

He had not travaill long, when on the way
He wofull lady, wofull Una, met,
Fast flying from the Paynims greedy pray,
Whilest Satyrane him from pursuit did let:
Who when her eyes she on the dwarf had
set,
And saw the signes, that deadly tydings
spake,
She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret,
And lively breath her sad brest did forsake.
Yet might her pitteous hart be seene to pant
and quake.

XXI

The messenger of so unhappie newes
Would faine have dyde; dead was his hart
within;

Yet outwardly some little comfort shewes:
At last recovering hart, he does begin
To rubb her temples, and to chaufe her
chin,
And everie tender part does tosse and
turne:
So hardly he the flitted life does win,
Unto her native prison to retourne:
Then gins her grieved ghost thus to lament
and mourne:

XXII

'Ye dreary instruments of dolefull sight,
That doe this deadly spectacle behold,
Why do ye lenger feed on loathed light,
Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,
Sith cruell fates the carefull threds un-
fould,
The which my life and love together tyde?
Now let the stony dart of sencelesse cold
Perce to my hart, and pas through everie
side,
And let eternall night so sad sight fro me
hyde.

XXIII

'O lightsome day, the lampe of highest
Jove,
First made by him, mens wandring wayes
to guyde,
When darknesse he in deepest dongeon
drove,
Henceforth thy hated face for ever hyde,
And shut up heavens windowes shyning
wyde:
For earthly sight can nought but sorow
breed,
And late repentance, which shall long abyde.
Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feed,
But, seeld up with death, shall have their
deadly meed.'

XXIV

Then downe againe she fell unto the ground;
But he her quickly reared up againe:
Thrise did she sinke adowne in deadly
swownd,
And thrise he her reviv'd with busie paine:
At last, when life recover'd had the raine,
And over-wrestled his strong enemy,
With foltring tong, and trembling everie
vaine,
'Tell on,' quoth she, 'the wofull tragedy,
The which these reliques sad present unto
mine eye.

XXV

'Tempestuous Fortune hath spent all her
spight,
And thrilling Sorrow throwne his utmost
dart;
Thy sad tong cannot tell more heavy plight
Then that I feele, and harbour in mine hart:
Who hath endur'd the whole, can beare ech
part.
If death it be, it is not the first wound,
That launched hath my brest with bleeding
smart.
Begin, and end the bitter balefull stound;
If lesse then that I feare, more favour I
have found.'

XXVI

Then gan the dwarfe the whole discourse
declare:
The subtile traines of Archimago old;
The wanton loves of false Fidessa fayre,
Bought with the blood of vanquisht Paynim
bold;
The wretched payre transformd to treen
mould;
The House of Pryde, and perilles round
about;
The combat, which he with Sansjoy did
hound;
The lucklesse conflict with the gyaunt stout,
Wherein captiv'd, of life or death he stood
in doubt.

XXVII

She heard with patience all unto the end,
And strove to maister sorrowfull assay,
Which greater grew, the more she did con-
tend,
And almost rent her tender hart in tway;
And love fresh coles unto her fire did lay:
For greater love, the greater is the losse.
Was never lady loved dearer day,
Then she did love the Knight of the Red-
crosse;
For whose deare sake so many troubles her
did tosse.

XXVIII

At last, when fervent sorrow slaked was,
She up arose, resolving him to find,
Alive or dead; and forward forth doth pas,
All as the dwarfe the way to her assynd;
And ever more, in constant carefull mind,
She fedd her wound with fresh renewed
bale:

Long tost with stormes, and bet with bitter
wind,
High over hills, and lowe adowne the dale,
She wandred many a wood, and measurd
many a vaele.

XXIX

At last she chaunced by good hap to meet
A goodly knight, faire marching by the
way,

Together with his squyre, arayed meet:
His glitterand armour shined far away,
Like glauncing light of Phœbus brightest
ray;

From top to toe no place appeared bare,
That deadly dint of steele endanger may:
Athwart his brest a bauldrick brave he
ware,

That shind, like twinkling stars, with stones
most pretious rare.

XXX

And in the midst thereof, one pretious stone
Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous
mights,

Shapt like a ladies head, exceeding shone,
Like Hesperus emongst the lesser lights,
And strove for to amaze the weaker sights:
Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong
In yvory sheath, yearv'd with curious
slights;

Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle
strong

Of mother perle, and buckled with a golden
tong.

XXXI

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,
Both glorious brightnesse and great terrour
bredd;

For all the crest a dragon did enfold
With greedie pawes, and over all did spredd
His golden winges: his dreadfull hideous
hedd,

Close couched on the bever, seemd to throw
From flaming mouth bright sparckles fiery
redd,

That suddaine horreur to faint hartes did
show;

And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his
back full low.

XXXII

Upon the top of all his loftie crest,
A bounch of heares discoloured diversly,

With sprinleed pearle and gold full richly
drest,

Did shake, and seemd to daunce for jollity;
Like to an almond tree ymounted hye

On top of greene Selinis all alone,
With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
Whose tender locks do tremble every one
At everie little breath, that under heaven
is blowne.

XXXIII

His warlike shield all closely cover'd was,
Ne might of mortall eye be ever seene;
Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras;
Such earthly mettals soone consumed beene;
But all of diamond perfect pure and cleene
It framed was, one massy entire mould,
Hewen out of adamant rocke with engines
keene,

That point of speare it never percen could,
Ne dint of firefull sword divide the sub-
stance would.

XXXIV

The same to wight he never wont disclose,
But when as monsters huge he would dis-
may,

Or daunt unequall armies of his foes,
Or when the flying heavens he would af-
fray:

For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,
That Phœbus golden face it did attaint,
As when a cloud his beames doth over-lay;
And silver Cynthia waxed pale and faynt,
As when her face is staynd with magicke
arts constraint.

XXXV

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
Nor bloody wordes of bold enchaunters
call,

But all that was not such as seemd in
sight

Before that shield did fade, and suddaine
fall:

And when him list the raskall routes ap-
pall,

Men into stones therewith he could trans-
mew,

And stones to dust, and dust to nought at
all;

And when him list the prouder lookes sub-
dew,

He would them gazing blind, or tarne to
other hew.

XXXVI

Ne let it seeme that credence this exceedes;
For he that made the same was knowne
right well

To have done much more admirable deedes.
It Merlin was, which whylome did excell
All living wightes in might of magicke
spell:

Both shield, and sword, and armour all he
wrought

For this young Prince, when first to armes
he fell;

But when he dyde, the Faery Queene it
brought

To Faerie Lond, where yet it may be seene,
if sought.

XXXVII

A gentle youth, his dearly loved squire,
His speare of heben wood behind him bare,
Whose harmful head, thrise heated in the
fire,

Had riven many a brest with pikehead
square;

A goodly person, and could menage faire
His stabborne steed with curbed canon bitt,
Who under him did trample as the aire,
And chaufft, that any on his backe should
sitt;

The yron rowels into frothy fome he bitt.

XXXVIII

Whenas this knight nigh to the lady drew,
With lovely court he gan her entertaïne;
But when he heard her aunswers loth, he
knew

Some secret sorrow did her heart distraîne:
Which to allay, and calme her storming
paine,

Faire feeling words he wisely gan display,
And for her humor fitting purpose faine,
To tempt the cause it selfe for to bewray;
Wherewith enmovd, these bleeding words
she gan to say:

XXXIX

'What worlds delight, or joy of living
speech,

Can hart, so plunged in sea of sorrowes
deep,

And heaped with so huge misfortunes,
reach?

The carefull cold beginneth for to creep,
And in my heart his yron arrow steep,
Some as I thinke upon my bitter bale:

Such helplesse harmes yts better hidden
keep,

Then rip up grieve, where it may not availle;
My last left comfort is, my woes to weepe
and waile.'

XL

'Ah! lady deare,' quoth then the gentle
knight,

'Well may I ween your grief is wondrous
great;

For wondrous great grieve groneth in my
spright,

Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes
treat.

But, woefull lady, let me you intrete
For to unfold the anguish of your hart:
Mishaps are maistred by advice discrete,
And counsell mitigates the greatest smart;
Found never help, who never would his
hurts impart.'

XLI

'O but,' quoth she, 'great grieve will not be
tould,

And can more easily be thought then said.'

'Right so,' quoth he; 'but he, that never
would,

Could never: will to might gives greatest
aid.'

'But grieve,' quoth she, 'does greater grow
displaid,

If then it find not helpe, and breeds de-
spaire.'

'Despaire breeds not,' quoth he, 'where
faith is staid.'

'No faith so fast,' quoth she, 'but flesh
does paire.'

'Flesh may empaire,' quoth he, 'but reason
can repaire.'

XLII

His goodly reason and well guided speach
So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
Which love and fortune in her heart had
wrought,

And said: 'Faïre sir, I hope good hap hath
brought

You to inquire the secrets of my grieve,
Or that your wisdom will direct my
thought,

Or that your prowess can me yield reliefe:
Then heare the story sad, which I shall tell
you brieve.

XLIII

'The forlorne maiden, whom your eies have
seene

The laughing stocke of Fortunes mockeries,
Am th' onely daughter of a king and
queene;

Whose parents deare, whiles equal destinies
Did runne about, and their felicities
The favourable heavens did not envy,
Did spred their rule through all the terri-
tories,

Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by,
And Gehons golden waves doe wash con-
tinually.

XLIV

'Till that their cruell cursed enemy,
An huge great dragon, horrible in sight,
Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,
With murderous ravine, and devouring might,
Their kingdom spoild, and countrey wasted
quight:

Themselves, for feare into his jawes to fall,
He forst to castle strong to take their flight,
Where, fast embard in mighty brasen wall,
He has them now fowr years besiegd, to
make them thrall.

XLV

'Full many knights, adventurous and stout,
Have enterprizd that monster to subdew;
From every coast, that heaven walks about,
Have thither come the noble martial crew,
That famous harde atchievements still pur-
sue;

Yet never any could that girlond win,
But all still shronke, and still he greater
grew:

All they for want of faith, or guilt of sin,
The pittieus pray of his fiers cruelty have
bin.

XLVI

'At last, yled with far reported praise,
Which flying fame throughout the world
had spred,

Of doughty knights, whom Fary Land did
raise,

That noble order hight of Maidenhed,
Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped,
Of Gloriane, great queene of glory bright,
Whose kingdoms seat Cleopolis is red,
There to obtaine some such redoubted knight,
That parents deare from tyrants powre del-
liver might.

XLVII

'Yt was my chaunce (my chaunce was faire
and good)

There for to find a fresh unproved knight,
Whose manly hands imbrawd in guilty
blood

Had never beene, ne ever by his might
Had throwne to ground the unregarded
right:

Yet of his prowesse prooffe he since hath
made

(I witnes am) in many a cruell fight;
The groning ghosts of many one dismaide
Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging
blade.

XLVIII

'And ye, the forlorne reliques of his powre,
His biting sword, and his devouring speare,
Which have endured many a dreadful
stowre,

Can speake his prowesse, that did earst you
beare,

And well could rule: now he hath left you
heare,

To be the record of his ruefull losse,
And of my dolefull disaventurous deare:
O heavie record of the good Redcrosse,
Where have yee left your lord, that could
so well you tosse?

XLIX

'Well hoped I, and faire beginnings had,
That he my captive languor should re-
deeme;

Till, all unweeting, an enchaunter bad
His sence abusd, and made him to mis-
deeme

My loyalty, not such as it did seeme,
That rather death desire then such despight.
Be judge, ye heavens, that all things right
esteeme,

How I him lov'd, and love with all my
might!

So thought I eke of him, and think I
thought aright.

L

'Thenceforth me desolate he quite for-
sooke,

To wander where wilde fortune would me
lead,

And other bywaies he himselfe betooke,
Where never foote of living wight did
tread,

That brought not backe the balefull body
dead;
In which him chaunced false Duesa meete,
Mine onely foe, mine onely deadly dread,
Who with her witchcraft, and misseeming
sweete,
Inveigled him to follow her desires un-
meete.

LI

'At last, by subtile sleights she him be-
traid
Unto his foe, a gyaunt huge and tall;
Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismaid,
Unwares surprised, and with mighty mall
The monster mercilesse him made to fall,
Whose fall did never foe before behold;
And now in darkesome dungeon, wretched
thrall,
Bemedileesse, for aie he doth him hold;
This is my cause of grieve, more great then
may be told.'

LII

Ere she had ended all, she gan to faint;
But he her comforted, and faire bespake:
'Certes, madame, ye have great cause of
plaint,
That stoutest heart, I weene, could cause
to quake.
But be of cheare, and comfort to you take:
For till I have acquitt your captive knight,
Assure your selfe, I will you not forsake.'
His chearefull words reviv'd her chearelesse
spright:
So forth they went, the dwarfe them guid-
ing ever right.

CANTO VIII

Faire virgin, to redeeme her deare,
Bringes Arthure to the fight:
Who slayes the gyaunt, wounds the beast,
And strips Duesa quight.

I

AY me! how many perils doe enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily
fall,
Were not that Heavenly Grace doth him
uphold,
And stedfast Truth acquite him out of all!
Her love is firme, her care continuall,
So oft as he, through his own foolish pride
Or weaknes, is to sinfull bands made thrall:

Els should this Redecrosse Knight in bands
have dyde,
For whose deliverance she this Prince doth
thether guyd.

II

They sadly travaile thus, untill they came
Nigh to a castle builded strong and hye:
Then cryde the dwarfe, 'Lo! yonder is the
same,
In which my lord, my liege, doth lucklesse ly,
Thrall to that gyaunts hatefull tyranny:
Therefore, deare sir, your mightie powres
assay.'
The noble knight alighted by and by
From loftie steed, and badd the ladie stay,
To see what end of fight should him befall
that day.

III

So with the squire, th' admirer of his might,
He marched forth towards that castle
wall;
Whose gates he fownd fast shutt, ne living
wight
To warde the same, nor answeere commers
call.
Then tooke that squire an horne of bugle
small,
Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold
And tasselles gay. Wyde wonders over all
Of that same hornes great vertues weren
told,
Which had approved bene in uses manifold.

IV

Was never wight that heard that shrilling
sownd,
But trembling feare did feel in every vaine:
Three miles it might be easy heard around.
And ecchoes three answerd it selfe againe.
No false enchauntment, nor deceitfull
traine
Might once abide the terror of that blast,
But presently was void and wholly vaine:
No gate so strong, no locke so firme and
fast,
But with that percing noise flew open quite,
or brast.

V

The same before the geaunts gate he blew,
That all the castle quaked from the grownd,
And every dore of freewill open flew:
The gyaunt selfe dismaied with that sownd,

Where he with his Duessa dalliaunce
fownd,
In hast came rushing forth from inner
bowre,
With staring countenance sterne, as one as-
townd,
And staggering steps, to weet what suddein
stowre
Had wrought that horror strange, and
dar'd his dreaded powre.

VI

And after him the proud Duessa came,
High mounted on her many headed beast;
And every head with fyrie tongue did flame,
And every head was crowned on his creast,
And bloody mouthed with late cruell feast.
That when the knight beheld, his mightie
shild
Upon his manly arme he soone addrest,
And at him fiersly flew, with corage fild,
And eger greedinesses through every mem-
ber thirld.

VII

Therewith the gyant buckled him to fight,
Inflamd with scornfull wrath and high dis-
daine,
And lifting up his dreadfull club on hight,
All armd with ragged anubbes and knottie
graine,
Him thought at first encounter to have
slaine.
But wise and wary was that noble pere,
And lightly leaping from so monstrous
maine,
Did fayre avoide the violence him nere;
It booted nought to thinke such thunder-
bolts to beare.

VIII

Ne shame he thought to shonne so hideous
might.
The ydle stroke, enforcing furious way,
Missing the marke of his misaymed sight,
Did fall to ground, and with his heavy
sway
So deeply dinted in the driven clay,
That three yardees deepe a furrow up did
throw:
The sad earth, wounded with so sore assay,
Did grone full grievous underneath the
blow,
And trembling with strange feare, did like
an earthquake shew.

IX

As when almightie Jove, in wrathfull mood
To wreake the guilt of mortall sins is bent,
Hurles forth his thundring dart with dead-
food,
Enrold in flames, and smouldring drev-
ment,
Through riven cloudes and molten firm-
ment;
The fiers threeforked engin, making way,
Both loftie towres and highest trees hat-
rent,
And all that might his angry passage stay,
And shooting in the earth, castes up
mount of clay.

X

His boystrous club, so buried in the grownd
He could not rearen up againe so light,
But that the knight him at advantage fownd
And whiles he strove his combed clubbe to
quight
Out of the earth, with blade all burning
bright
He smott of his left arme, which like
block
Did fall to ground, depriv'd of native
might:
Large streames of blood out of the trunkes
stock
Forth gushed, like fresh water stream
from riven rocke.

XI

Dismayed with so desperate deadly wound
And eke impatient of unwonted payne,
He lowdly brayd with beastly yelling
sownd,
That all the fieldes rebellowed againe:
As great a noyse, as when in Cymbrian
plaine
An heard of bulles, whom kindly rage dot-
sting,
Doe for the milky mothers want complaine
And fill the fieldes with troublous bellow-
ing:
The neighbor woods arownd with hollow
murmur ring.

XII

That when his deare Duessa heard, and saw
The evill stownd that daungerd her estate
Unto his aide she hastily did draw
Her dreadfull beast, who, swolne with
blood of late,

Came ramping forth with proud presumptuous gate,
And threatned all his heades like flaming brandes.

But him the squire made quickly to retrate,
Encountring fiers with single sword in hand,

And twixt him and his lord did like a bulwarke stand.

XIII

The proud Duesse, full of wrathfull spight
And fiers disdaine, to be affronted so,
Enforst her purple beast with all her might,
That stop out of the way to overthrowe,
Scorning the let of so unequal foe:
But nathemore would that courageous swayne

To her yeeld passage, gainst his lord to goe,
But with outrageous strokes did him restrain,
And with his body hard the way atwixt them twaine.

XIV

Then tooke the angrie witch her golden cup,
Which still she bore, replete with magiok artes;

Death and despayre did many thereof sup,
And secret poyson through their inner partes,

Th' eternall bale of heauie wounded harts;
Which, after charmes and some enchaunments said,

She lightly sprinkled on his weaker partes;
Therewith his sturdie corage soone was quayd,

And all his sences were with suddein dread dismayd.

XV

So downe he fell before the cruell beast,
Who on his neck his bloody clawes did seize,

That life nigh crusht out of his panting brest:

No powre he had to stirre, nor will to rize.
That when the carefull knight gan well auise,

He lightly left the foe with whom he fought,

And to the beast gan turne his enterprise;
For wondrous anguish in his hart it wrought,
To see his loved squyre in such thraldom brought.

XVI

And high aduancing his blood-thirstie blade,

Stroke one of those deformed heades so sore,

That of his puissance proud ensample made;

His monstrous scalpe downe to his teeth it tore,

And that misformed shape misshaped more:
A sea of blood gusht from the gaping wound,

That her gay garments staynd with filthy gore,

And overflowed all the field arownd;
That over shoes in blood he waded on the grownd.

XVII

Thereat he rored for exceeding paine,
That, to have heard, great horror would have bred,

And scourging th' emptie ayre with his long trayne,

Through great impatience of his grieved hed,

His gorgeous ryder from her loftie sted
Would have cast downe, and trodd in durty myre,

Had not the gyaunt soone her succoured;
Who, all enrag'd with smart and frantick yre,

Came hurtling in full fiers, and forst the knight retyre.

XVIII

The force, which wont in two to be disperst,

In one alone left hand he now unites,
Which is through rage more strong then both were erst;

With which his hideous club aloft he dities,
And at his foe with furious rigor smites,
That strongest oake might seeme to overthrow:

The stroke upon his shield so heauie lites,
That to the ground it doubleth him full low:

What mortall wight could ever beare so monstrous blow?

XIX

And in his fall his shield, that covered was,
Did loose his vele by chauce, and open flew:

The light whereof, that heavens light did
 pas,
 Such blazing brightnesse through the ayer
 threw,
 That eye mote not the same endure to vew.
 Which when the gyaunt spyde with staring
 eye,
 He downe let fall his arme, and soft with-
 drew
 His weapon huge, that heaved was on hye,
 For to have slain the man, that on the
 ground did lye.

XX

And eke the fruitfull-headed beast, amazd
 At flashing beames of that sunshiny shield,
 Became stark blind, and all his senses dazd,
 That downe he tumbled on the durty field,
 And seemd himselfe as conquered to yield.
 Whom when his maistresse proud perceiv'd
 to fall,
 Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintnesse
 reeld,
 Unto the gyaunt lowdly she gan call,
 'O helpe, Orgoglio, helpe! or els we periah
 all.'

XXI

At her so pitteous cry was much amov'd
 Her champion stout, and for to ayde his
 frend,
 Againe his wonted angry weapon prov'd:
 But all in vaine: for he has redd his end
 In that bright shield, and all his forces
 spend
 Them selves in vaine: for since that glaun-
 cing sight,
 He hath no poure to hurt, nor to defend;
 As where th' Almightyes lightning broad
 does light,
 It dummes the dazed eyen, and daunts the
 senses quight.

XXII

Whom when the Prince, to batteill new
 addrest
 And threatning high his dreadful stroke,
 did see,
 His sparkling blade about his head he blest,
 And smote off quite his right leg by the
 knee,
 That downe he tumbled; as an aged tree,
 High growing on the top of rocky clift,
 Whose hartstrings with keene steele nigh
 heven be;

The mightie trunck halfe rent, with ragged
 rift
 Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with
 fearefull drift.

XXIII

Or as a castle, reared high and round,
 By subtile engins and malicious slight
 Is undermined from the lowest ground,
 And her foundation forst, and feebled
 quight,
 At last downe falles, and with her heaped
 hight
 Her hastie ruine does more heavie make,
 And yields it selfe unto the victours might;
 Such was this gyaunts fall, that seemd to
 shake
 The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare
 did quake.

XXIV

The knight then, lightly leaping to the pray,
 With mortall steele him smot againe so
 sore,
 That headlesse his unweldy bodie lay,
 All wallowd in his owne fowle bloody gore,
 Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous
 store.
 But soone as breath out of his brest did pas,
 That huge great body, which the gyaunt
 bore,
 Was vanisht quite, and of that monstrous
 mas
 Was nothing left, but like an emptie blader
 was.

XXV

Whose grievous fall when false Duceasa
 spyde,
 Her golden cup she cast unto the ground,
 And crowned mitre rudely threw asyde;
 Such piercing grieve her stubborne hart did
 wound,
 That she could not endure that dolefull
 stound,
 But leaving all behind her, fled away:
 The light-foot squire her quickly turnd
 around,
 And by hard meanes enforcing her to stay,
 So brought unto his lord, as his deserved
 pray.

XXVI

The roiall virgin, which beheld from farre,
 In pensive plight and sad perplexitie,

The whole atchievement of this doubtfull warre,

Came running fast to greet his victorie,
With sober gladnesse and myld modestie,
And with sweet joyous cheare him thus bespake:

'Fayre branch of noblesse, flowre of chevalrie,

That with your worth the world amazed make,

How shall I quite the paynes, ye suffer for my sake ?

XXVII

'And you, fresh budd of vertue springing fast,

Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto deaths dore,

What hath poore virgin for such perill past
Wherewith you to reward ? Accept therefore

My simple selfe, and service evermore:
And He that high does sit, and all things see

With equall eye, their merites to restore,
Behold what ye this day have done for mee,
And what I cannot quite, requite with usures.

XXVIII

'But sith the heavens, and your faire handeling,

Have made you master of the field this day,
Your fortune maister eke with governing,

And well begonne end all so well, I pray,
Ne let that wicked woman scape away;

For she it is, that did my lord bethrall,
My dearest lord, and deepe in dongeon lay,

Where he his better dayes hath wasted all.
O heare, how piteous he to you for ayd

does call.'

XXIX

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his squyre,
That scarlot whore to keepeen carefully;

Whyles he himselfe with greedie great desyre

Into the castle entred forcibly;
Where living creature none he did espye.

Then gan he lowdly through the house to call:

But no man car'd to answer to his crye.
There raignd a solemne silence over all,

Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seene
in bowre or hall.

XXX

At last, with creeping crooked pace forth came

An old old man, with beard as white as snow,

That on a staffe his feeble steps did frame,
And guyde his wearie gate both too and fro;

For his eye sight him fayled long ygo:
And on his arme a bounch of keyes he bore,

The which unused rust did overgrow:
Those were the keyes of every inner dore,

But he could not them use, but kept them still in store.

XXXI

But very uncouth sight was to behold,
How he did fashion his untoward pace,

For as he forward moovd his footing old,
So backward still was turnd his wrinckled face,

Unlike to men, who ever as they trace,
Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.

This was the auncient keeper of that place,
And foster father of the gyaunt dead;

His name Ignaro did his nature right ahead.

XXXII

His reverend heares and holy gravities
The knight much honord, as beseemed well,

And gently askt, where all the people bee,
Which in that stately building wont to dwell:

Who answerd him full soft, *He could not tell.*

Againe he askt, where that same knight was layd,

Whom great Orgoglio with his puissaunce fell

Had made his caytive thrall: againe he sayde,

He could not tell: ne ever other answer made.

XXXIII

Then asked he, which way he in might pas:

He could not tell, againe he answered.
Thereat the courteous knight displeased was,

And said: 'Old syre, it seemes thou hast not red

How ill it fits with that same silver hed,
In vaine to mocke, or mockt in vaine to bee:
But if thou be, as thou art pourtrahed
With natures pen, in ages grave degree,
Aread in graver wise what I demand of thee.'

XXXIV

His answer likewise was, *He could not tell.*
Whose sencelesse speach and doted ignorance

When as the noble Prince had marked well,
He ghest his nature by his countenance,
And calmd his wrath with goodly temperance.

Then to him stepping, from his arme did reach

Those keyes, and made himselfe free entrance.

Each dore he opened without any breach;
There was no barre to stop, nor foe him to empeach.

XXXV

There all within full rich arayd he found,
With royall arras and resplendent gold,
And did with store of every thing abound,
That greatest princes presence might behold.
But all the floore (too filthy to be told)
With blood of guiltlesse babes, and innocents trew,

Which there were slaine, as sheepe out of the fold,

Defiled was, that dreadfull was to vew,
And sacred ashes over it was strowed new.

XXXVI

And there beside of marble stone was built
An altare, carv'd with cunning ymagery,
On which trew Christians blood was often spilt,

And holy martyres often doen to dye,
With cruell malice and strong tyranny:
Whose blessed sprites from underneath the stone

To God for vengeance cryde continually,
And with great griefe were often heard to grone,

That hardest heart would bleede to heare
their piteous mone.

XXXVII

Through every rowme he sought, and everie bowr,

But no where could he find that wofull thrall:

At last he came unto an yron doore,
That fast was lockt, but key found not at all

Emongst that bounch to open it withall;
But in the same a little grate was pight,
Through which he sent his voyce, and lowd did call

With all his powre, to weet if living wight
Were housed therewithin, whom he enlargen might.

XXXVIII

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce

These pitteous plaintes and dolours did resound:

'O who is that, which bringes me happy choyce

Of death, that here lye dying every stound,
Yet live perforce in balefull darkenesse bound?

For now these moones have changed thrice their hew,

And have beene thrice hid underneath the ground,

Since I the heavens chearefull face did vew.

O welcome, thou, that doest of death bring tydings trew!'

XXXIX

Which when that champion heard, with percing point

Of pitty deare his hart was thrilled sore,
And trembling horror ran through every joynt,

For ruth of gentle knight so fowle forlore:
Which shaking off, he rent that yron dore,

With furious force and indignation fell;
Where entred in, his foot could find no flore,

But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell,
That breathed ever forth a filthie banefull smell.

XL

But nether darkenesse fowle, nor filthy bands,

Nor noyous smell his purpose could withhold,

(Entire affection hateth nicer hands)

But that with constant zeale, and corage bold,

After long paines and labors manifold,

He found the meanes that prisoner up to
reare;
Whose feeble thighes, unable to uphold
His pined corse, him scarce to light could
beare,
A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly
dreere.

XLI

His sad dull eies, deepe sunck in hollow
pita,
Could not endure th' unwonted sunne to
view;
His bare thin cheekes for want of better
bita,
And empty sides deceived of their dew,
Could make a stony hart his hap to rew;
His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned
bowrs
Were wont to rive steele plates, and hel-
mets hew,
Were clene consum'd, and all his vitall
powres
Decayd, and al his flesh shronk up like
withered flowres.

XLII

Whome when his lady saw, to him she ran
With hasty joy: to see him made her glad,
And sad to view his visage pale and wan,
Who earst in flowres of freshest youth was
clad.
Tho, when her well of teares she wasted
bad,
She said: 'Ah, dearest lord! what evill
starre
On you hath frownd, and poudred his influ-
ence bad,
That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre,
And this misseeming hew your manly looks
doth marre?

XLIII

'But welcome now, my lord, in wele or
woe,
Whose presence I have lackt too long a
day;
And fye on Fortune, mine avowed foe,
Whose wrathful wreakes them selves doe
now alay,
And for these wronges shall treble penance
pay
Of treble good: good growes of evils priefe.'
The chearelesse man, whom sorow did
dismay,

Had no delight to treaten of his grieve;
His long endured famine needed more re-
liefe.

XLIV

'Fairst lady,' then said that victorious
knight,
'The things, that grievous were to doe, or
beare,
Them to renew, I wote, breeds no delight;
Best musike breeds dislike in loathing
eare:
But th' only good, that growes of passed
feare,
Is to be wise, and ware of like agein.
This daies ensample hath this lesson deare
Deepe written in my heart with yron
pen,
That blisse may not abide in state of mor-
tall men.

XLV

'Henceforth, sir knight, take to you wonted
strength,
And maister these mishaps with patient
might:
Loe wher your foe lies stretcht in monstrous
length,
And loe that wicked woman in your sight,
The roote of all your care and wretched
plight,
Now in your powre, to let her live, or die.'
'To doe her die,' quoth Una, 'were de-
spight,
And shame t'avenge so weake an enemy;
But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let
her fly.'

XLVI

So, as she bad, that witch they disaraid,
And robd of roial robes, and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were displaid;
Ne spared they to strip her naked all.
Then, when they had despoild her tire and
call,
Such as she was, their eies might her be-
hold,
That her misshaped parts did them appall,
A loathly, wrinkled hag, ill favoured, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth
not be told.

XLVII

Her crafty head was altogether bald,
And, as in hate of honorable eld,

Was overgrowne with scurfe and filthy scald;
Her teeth out of her rotten gummes were
feld,

And her sowre breath abhominably smeld;
Her dried dugs, lyke bladders lacking wind,
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them
weld;

Her wrizled skin, as rough as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would have loathd all
womankind.

XLVIII

Her neather parts, the shame of all her
kind,
My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to
write:

But at her rompe she growing had behind
A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight;
And eke her feete most monstrous were in
sight;

For one of them was like an eagles claw,
With griping talaunts armd to greedy fight,
The other like a beares uneven paw:
More ugly shape yet never living creature
saw.

XLIX

Which when the knights beheld, amazd
they were,

And wondred at so fowle deformed wight.
'Such then,' said Una, 'as she seemeth here,
Such is the face of Falshood, such the sight
Of fowle Duessa, when her borrowed light
Is laid away, and counterfesaunce knowne.'
Thus when they had the witch disrobed
quight,

And all her filthy feature open showne,
They let her goe at will, and wander waies
unknowne

L

Shee, flying fast from heavens hated face,
And from the world that her discovered
wide,

Fled to the wastfull wilderness apace,
From living eies her open shame to hide,
And lurkt in rocks and caves, long un-
espide.

But that faire crew of knights, and Una
faire,

Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest them selves, and weary powres re-
pare;

Where store they fownd of al that dainty
was and rare.

CANTO IX

His loves and lignage Arthure tells:
The knights knitt friendly bands:
Sir Trevisan flies from Despeyre,
Whom Redcros Knight withstands.

I

O GOODLY golden chayne ! wherewith yfere
The vertues linked are in lovely wize,
And noble mindes of yore allyed were,
In brave poursuit of chevalrous emprise,
That none did others safety despize,
Nor aid envy to him, in need that stands,
But friendly each did others praise devise
How to advaunce with favourable hands,
As this good Prince redeemd the Red-
crosse Knight from bands.

II

Who when their powres, empayrd through
labor long,
With dew repast they had recured well,
And that weake captive wight now waxed
strong,
Them list no longer there at leasure dwell,
But forward fare, as their adventures fell:
But ere they parted, Una faire besought
That stranger knight his name and nation
tell;
Least so great good, as he for her had
wrought,
Should die unknown, and buried be in
thankles thought.

III

'Faire virgin,' said the Prince, 'yee me
require
A thing without the compas of my witt:
For both the lignage and the certein sire,
From which I sprong, from mee are hidde
yitt.

For all so soone as life did me admitt
Into this world, and shewed heavens light,
From mothers pap I taken was unfit,
And streight deliver'd to a Fary knight,
To be upbrought in gentle thewes and mar-
tiall might.

IV

'Unto old Timon he me brought bylive,
Old Timon, who in youthly yeares hath
beene
In warlike feates th' expertest man alive,
And is the wisest now on earth I weene:
His dwelling is low in a valley greene,

Under the foot of Rauran mossy bore,
From whence the river Dee, as silver cleene,
His tomling billowes rolls with gentle rore:
There all my daies he trained mee up in
vertuous lore.

V

'Thether the great magicien Merlin came,
As was his use, ofttimes to visitt mee;
For he had charge my discipline to frame,
And tutors nouriture to oversee.
Him oft and oft I askt in privy,
Of what loines and what lignage I did
spring.
Whose aunswere had me still assured bee,
That I was sonne and heire unto a king,
As time in her just term the truth to light
should bring.'

VI

'Well worthy impe,' said then the lady gent,
'And pupill fitt for such a tutors hand!
But what adventure, or what high intent,
Hath brought you hether into Fary Land,
Aread, Prince Arthure, crowne of martiall
band?'
'Full hard it is,' quoth he, 'to read aright
The course of heavenly cause, or under-
stand
The secret meaning of th' Eternall Might,
That rules mens waies, and rules the
thoughts of living wight.

VII

'For whether He through fatal deepe fore-
sight
Me hither sent, for cause to me unghost,
Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day
and night
Whilome doth rangle in my riven brest,
With forced fury following his behest,
Me hether brought by wayes yet never
found,
You to have helpt I hold my selfe yet
blest.'
'Ah! courteous knight,' quoth she, 'what
secret wound
Could ever find to grieve the gentlest hart
on ground?'

VIII

'Deare dame,' quoth he, 'you sleeping
sparkes awake,
Which, troubled once, into huge flames will
grow,

Ne ever will their fervent fury slake,
Till living moysture into smoke do flow,
And wasted life doe lye in ashes low.
Yet sithens silence lesseneth not my fire,
But, told, it flames, and, hidden, it does
glow,
I will revele what ye so much desire:
Ah Love! lay down thy bow, the whiles I
may respyre.

IX

'It was in freshest flowre of youthly
yeares,
When corage first does creepe in manly
chest;
Then first the cole of kindly heat appeares,
To kindle love in every living brest:
But me had warnd old Timons wise behest,
Those creeping flames by reason to subdew,
Before their rage grew to so great unrest,
As miserable lovers use to rew,
Which still wex old in woe, whiles wo stil
wexeth new.

X

'That ydle name of love, and lovers life,
As losse of time, and vertues enimy,
I ever scornd, and joyd to stirre up strife
In middest of their mournfull tragedy,
Ay wont to laugh, when them I heard to cry,
And blow the fire, which them to ashes
brent:
Their god himselfe, grievd at my libertie,
Shott many a dart at me with fiers intent,
But I them warded all with wary govern-
ment.

XI

'But all in vaine: no fort can be so strong,
Ne fleshly brest can armed be so sownd,
But will at last be wonne with batttrie long,
Or unawares at disavantage fownd:
Nothing is sure that growes on earthly
grownd:
And who most trustes in arme of fleshly
might,
And boastes, in beauties chaine not to be
bownd,
Doth soonest fall in disaventrous fight,
And yeldes his caytive neck to victours
most despight.

XII

'Ensampl make of him your haplesse joy,
And of my selfe now mated, as ye see;

Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging
boy
Did soone pluck downe, and curb'd my lib-
ertee.

For on a day, priekt forth with jollitee
Of looser life, and heat of hardiment,
Raunging the forest wide on courser free,
The fields, the floods, the heavens, with one
consent,
Did seeme to laugh on me, and favour
mine intent.

XIII

'Forwearied with my sportes, I did alight
From loftie steed, and downe to sleepe me
layd;
The verdant gras my couch did goodly
dight,
And pillow was my helmet fayre displayd:
Whiles every sence the humour sweet em-
bayd,
And slombring soft my hart did steale
away,
Me seemed, by my side a royall mayd
Her daintie limbes full softly down did
lay:
So fayre a creature yet saw never sunny
day.

XIV

'Most goodly glee and lovely blandishment
She to me made, and badd me love her
deare;
For dearely sure her love was to me bent,
As, when just time expired, should appeare.
But whether dreames delude, or true it
were,
Was never hart so ravisht with delight,
Ne living man like wordes did ever heare,
As she to me delivered all that night;
And at her parting said, she Queene of
Faries hight.

XV

'When I awoke, and found her place de-
voyd,
And nought but pressed gras where she had
lyen,
I sorrowed all so much as earst I joyd,
And washed all her place with watry eyen.
From that day forth I lov'd that face di-
vyne;
From that day forth I cast in carefull
mynd,
To seeke her out with labor and long tyne,

And never vow to rest, till her I fynd:
Nyne monethes I seek in vain, yet ni'll
that vow unbynd.'

XVI

Thus as he spake, his visage waxed pale,
And chaunge of hew great passion did be-
wray;
Yett still he strove to cloke his inward bale,
And hide the smoke that did his fire display;
Till gentle Una thus to him gan say:
'O happy Queene of Faries, that hast
fownd,
Mongst many, one that with his prowesse
may
Defend thine honour, and thy foes con-
fownd!
True loves are often sown, but seldom
grow on grownd.'

XVII

'Thine, O then,' said the gentle Redcrosse
Knight,
'Next to that ladies love, shalbe the place,
O fayrest virgin, full of heavenly light,
Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly
race,
Was firstest fixt in myne extremest case.
And you, my lord, the patrone of my life,,
Of that great Queene may well gaine
worthie grace:
For onely worthie you through prowes
priefe,
Yf living man mote worthie be, to be her
liefe.'

XVIII

So diversly discoursing of their loves,
The golden sunne his glistring head gan
shew,
And sad remembrance now the Prince
amoves
With fresh desire his voyage to pursew:
Als Una earnd her travaill to renew.
Then those two knights, fast friendship for
to bynd,
And love establish each to other trew,
Gave goodly gifts, the signes of gratefull
mynd,
And eke, as pledges firme, right hands to-
gether joynd.

XIX

Prince Arthur gave a boxe of diamond sure,
Embowd with gold and gorgeous ornament,

Wherein were clood few drops of liquor
 pure,
 Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,
 That any wovnd could heale incontinent:
 Which to requite, the Redcrosse Knight
 him gave
 A booke, wherein his Saveours Testament
 Was writt with golden letters rich and
 brave;
 A worke of wondrous grace, and hable
 soules to save.

XX

Thus beene they parted, Arthur on his way
 To seeke his love, and th' other for to fight
 With Unaes foe, that all her realme did
 pray.
 But she, now weighing the decayed plight
 And shrunken synewes of her chosen
 knight,
 Would not a while her forward course pur-
 sew,
 Ne bring him forth in face of dreadfull
 fight,
 Till he recovered had his former hew:
 For him to be yet weake and wearie well
 she knew.

XXI

So as they traveld, lo! they gan espy
 An armed knight towards them gallop
 fast,
 That seemed from some feared foe to fly,
 Or other grisely thing, that him aghast.
 Still as he feld, his eye was backward
 cast,
 As if his feare still followed him behynd;
 Als flew his steed, as he his bandes had
 brast,
 And with his winged heeles did tread the
 wynd,
 As he had beene a fole of Pegasus his kynd.

XXII

Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his
 head
 To bee unrmnd, and curld uncombed heares
 Upstaring stiffe, dismaid with uncouth
 dread;
 Nor drop of blood in all his face appeares,
 Nor life in limbe: and to increase his
 fearea,
 In fowle reproch of knighthoodes fayre
 degree,
 About his neck an hempen rope he weares,

That with his glistring armes does ill
 agree;
 But he of rope, or armes, has now no
 memoree.

XXIII

The Redcrosse Knight toward him crossed
 fast,
 To weet what mister wight was so dis-
 mayd:
 There him he findes all sencelesse and
 aghast,
 That of him selfe he seemd to be afraid;
 Whom hardly he from flying forward
 stayd,
 Till he these wordes to him deliver might:
 'Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus arayd,
 And eke from whom make ye this hasty
 flight?
 For never knight I saw in such misseeming
 plight.'

XXIV

He answerd nought at all, but adding new
 Feare to his first amazment, staring wyde
 With stony eyes and hartlesse hollow hew,
 Astonisht stood, as one that had aspyde
 Infernall furies, with their chaines untyde.
 Him yett againe, and yett againe bespake
 The gentle knight; who nought to him re-
 plyde,
 But, trembling every joynt, did inly quake,
 And foltring tongue at last these words
 seemd forth to shake:

XXV

'For Gods deare love, sir knight, doe me
 not stay;
 For loe! he comes, he comes fast after mee!'
 Eft looking back, would faine have runne
 away;
 But he him forst to stay, and tellen free
 The secrete cause of his perplexitie:
 Yet nathemore by his bold hartie speach
 Could his blood frozen hart emboldened
 bee,
 But through his boldnes rather feare did
 reach;
 Yett, forst, at last he made through silence
 suddein breach.

XXVI

'And am I now in safetie sure,' quoth he,
 'From him that would have forced me to
 dye?

And is the point of death now turnd fro mee,
That I may tell this haplesse history ?
'Feare nought,' quoth he, 'no daunger now
is nye.'
'Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace,'
Said he, 'the which with this unlucky eye
I late beheld; and had not greater grace
Me reft from it, had bene partaker of the
place.

XXVII

'I lately chaunst (would I had never
chaunst !)
With a fayre knight to keopen companee,
Sir Terwin hight, that well himselfe ad-
vaunst
In all affayres, and was both bold and free,
But not so happy as mote happy bee:
He lov'd, as was his lot, a lady gent,
That him againe lov'd in the least degree:
For she was proud, and of too high intent,
And joyd to see her lover languish and
lament.

XXVIII

'From whom retourning sad and comfort-
lesse,
As on the way together we did fare,
We met that villen, (God from him me
blesse !)
That cursed wight, from whom I scapt
whylease,
A man of hell, that calls himselfe Despayre:
Who first us greets, and after fayre areedes
Of tydinges straunge, and of adventures
rare:
So creeping close, as snake in hidden weedes,
Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly
deedes.

XXIX

'Which when he knew, and felt our feeble
harts
Embost with bale, and bitter byting grieffe,
Which love had launched with his deadly
darts,
With wounding words, and termes of foule
reprieffe,
He pluckt from us all hope of dew relieffe,
That earst us held in love of lingring life:
Then hopelesse hartlesse, gan the cunning
thiefe
Perswade us dye, to stint all further strife:
To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty
knife.

XXX

'With which sad instrument of hasty death,
That wofull lover, loathing lenger light,
A wyde way made to let forth living breath.
But I, more fearefull or more lucky wight,
Dismayd with that deformed dismall sight,
Fledd fast away, halfe dead with dying
feare;
Ne yet assur'd of life by you, sir knight,
Whose like infirmity like chaunce may
beare:
But God you never let his charmed speaches
heare.'

XXXI

'How may a man,' said he, 'with idle speach
Be wonne to spoyle the castle of his health?'
'I wote,' quoth he, 'whom tryall late did
teach,
That like would not for all this worldes
wealth:
His subtile tong, like dropping honny,
mealt'h
Into the heart, and searcheth every vaine,
That ere one be aware, by secret stealth
His powre is reft, and weaknes doth re-
maine.
O never, sir, desire to try his guilefull
traine.'

XXXII

'Certes,' sayd he, 'hence shall I never rest,
Till I that treachours art have heard and
tryde;
And you, sir knight, whose name mote I
request,
Of grace do me unto his cabin guyde.'
'I that hight Trevisan,' quoth he, 'will
ryde
Against my liking backe, to doe you grace:
But nor for gold nor glee will I abyde
By you, when ye arrive in that same place;
For lever had I die, then see his deadly
face.'

XXXIII

Ere long they come, where that same wicked
wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy clift ypyght,
Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcases doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owle,
Shrieking his balefull note, which ever
drave

Far from that haunt all other chearefull
fowle;
And all about it wandering ghostes did wayle
and howle.

XXXIV

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruite nor leafe was ever
seene,

Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged
beene,

Whose carcases were scattred on the
greene,

And throned about the cliffs. Arrived there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and
dolefull teene,

Would faine have fled, ne durst approchen
neare,

But th' other forst him staye, and com-
forted in feare.

XXXV

That darkesome cave they enter, where they
find

That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind:

His griesie lookes, long growen and un-
bound,

Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face; through which his hol-
low eyne

Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound;
His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and
pine,

Were thronge into his jawes, as he did
never dyne.

XXXVI

His garment nought but many ragged
clouts,

With thornes together pind and patched
was,

The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts;
And him beside there lay upon the gras
A dreary corse, whose life away did pas,
All wallowd in his own yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas!
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing
flood.

XXXVII

Which piteous spectacle, approving trew
The wofull tale that Trevisan had told,

When as the gentle Redcrosse Knight did
vew,

With fire zeale he burnt in courage bold,
Him to avenge, before his blood were cold;
And to the villain sayd: 'Thou damned
wight,

The authour of this fact we here behold,
What justice can but judge against thee
right,

With thine owne blood to price his blood,
here shed in sight ?

XXXVIII

'What franticke fit,' quoth he, 'hath thus
distraught

Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to give ?
What justice ever other judgement taught,
But he should dye, who merites not to
live ?

None els to death this man despayring
drive,

But his owne guiltie mind deserving death.
Is then unjust to each his dew to give ?
Or let him dye, that loatheth living breath ?
Or let him die at ease, that liveth here un-
eath ?

XXXIX

'Who travailes by the wearie wandring
way,

To come unto his wished home in haste,
And meetes a flood, that doth his passage
stay,

Is not great grace to helpe him over past,
Or free his feet, that in the myre stickes
fast ?

Most envious man, that grieves at neigh-
bours good,

And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast !
Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath
stood

Upon the bancke, yet wilt thy selfe not pas
the flood ?

XL

'He there does now enjoy eternall rest
And happy ease, which thou doest want and
crave,

And further from it daily wanderest:
What if some little payne the passage have,
That makes frayle flesh to feare the bitter
wave ?

Is not short payne well borne, that bringes
long ease,

And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet grave ?

Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does
greatly please.'

XLI

The knight much wondred at his suddaine
wit,

And sayd: 'The terme of life is limited,
Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it:
The souldier may not move from watchfull
sted,

Nor leave his stand, untill his captaine bed.'

'Who life did limit by almightie doome,'
Quoth he, 'knowes best the termes estab-
lished;

And he that points the centonell his roome,
Doth license him depart at sound of morn-
ing droome.

XLII

'Is not His deed, what ever thing is donne
In heaven and earth? Did not He all
create,

To die againe? All ends, that was begonne.
Their times in His eternall booke of fate
Are written sure, and have their certein date.
Who then can strive with strong necessitie,
That holds the world in his still chaunging
state,

Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
When houre of death is come, let none aske
whence, nor why.

XLIII

'The lenger life, I wote, the greater sin,
The greater sin, the greater punishment:
All those great battels, which thou boasts
to win,

Through strife, and blood-shed, and avenge-
ment,

Now praysd, hereafter deare thou shalt re-
pent:

For life must life, and blood must blood re-
pay.

Is not enough thy evill life forespent?
For he that once hath missed the right way,
The further he doth goe, the further he
doth stray.

XLIV

'Then doe no further goe, no further stray,
But here ly downe, and to thy rest betake,
Th' ill to prevent, that life ensewen may.
For what hath life, that may it loved make,
And gives not rather cause it to forsake?

Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow,
strife,

Payne, hunger, cold, that makes the hart to
quake;

And ever fickle Fortune rageth rife;
All which, and thousands mo, do make a
loathsome life.

XLV

'Thou, wretched man, of death hast great-
est need,

If in true ballaunce thou wilt weigh thy state:
For never knight, that dared warlike deed,
More luckless dissaventures did amate:
Witnes the dungeon deepe, wherein of late
Thy life shutt up for death so oft did call;
And though good lucke prolonged hath thy
date,

Yet death then would the like mishaps fore-
stall,

Into the which heereafter thou maist happen
fall.

XLVI

'Why then doest thou, O man of sin, desire
To draw thy dayes forth to their last de-
gree?

Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire
High heaped up with huge iniquitee,
Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?
Is not enough, that to this lady mild
Thou falsed hast thy faith with perjuree,
And sold thy selfe to serve Duessa vild,
With whom in al abuse thou hast thy selfe
defild?

XLVII

'Is not He just, that all this doth behold
From highest heven, and beares an equall
eie?

Shall He thy sins up in His knowledge fold,
And guilty be of thine impietie?

Is not His lawe, Let every sinner die:
Die shall all flesh? What then must
needs be donne,

Is it not better to doe willinglie,
Then linger till the glas be all out runne?
Death is the end of woes: die soone, O
Faries sonne.'

XLVIII

The knight was much enmoved with his
speech,

That as a swords poynt through his hart
did perse,

And in his conscience made a secrete
breach,
Well knowing trew all that he did re-
herse;

And to his fresh remembraunce did reverse
The ugly vew of his deformed crimes,
That all his manly powres it did disperse,
As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes,
That oftentimes he quakt, and fainted
oftentimes.

XLIX

In which amazement when the miscreaunt
Perceived him to waver, weake and fraile,
Whiles trembling horror did his conscience
daunt,

And bellish anguish did his soule assaile,
To drive him to despaire, and quite to
quaille,

Hee shewd him, painted in a table plaine,
The damned ghosts, that doe in torments
waile,

And thousand feends, that doe them end-
lesse paine

With fire and brimstone, which for ever
shall remaine.

L

The sight whereof so thoroughly him dis-
maid,

That nought but death before his eies he
saw,

And ever burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th' Almightyes
law:

Then gan the villein him to overcrow,
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison,
fire,

And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bad him choose, what death he would
desire:

For death was dew to him, that had pro-
vokt Gods ire.

LI

But whenas none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught a dagger sharpe and
keene,

And gave it him in hand: his hand did
quake,

And tremble like a leafe of aspin greene,
And troubled blood through his pale face
was seene

To come and goe, with tidings from the
heart,

As it a ronning messenger had beene.
At last, resolv'd to worke his finall smart,
He lifted up his hand, that backe againe
did start.

LII

Which whenas Una saw, through every
vaine

The crudled cold ran to her well of life,
As in a swowne: but soone reliv'd againe,
Out of his hand she snatcht the cursed
knife,

And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
And to him said: 'Fie, fie, faint hearted
knight!

What meanest thou by this reprochfull
strife?

Is this the battaile, which thou vauntst to
fight

With that fire-mouthed dragon, horrible
and bright?

LIII

'Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly
wight,

Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly
hart,

Ne devilish thoughts dismay thy constant
spright.

In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?
Why shouldst thou then despire, that
chosen art?

Where justice growes, there grows eke
greter grace,

The which doth quench the brood of hellish
smart,

And that accurst hand-writing doth deface.
Arise, sir knight, arise, and leave this
cursed place.'

LIV

So up he rose, and thence amounted streight.
Which when the carle beheld, and saw his
guest

Would safe depart, for all his subtile
sleight,

He chose an halter from among the rest,
And with it hong him selfe, unbid unblest.
But death he could not worke himselfe
thereby;

For thousand times he so him selfe had
drest,

Yet nathelesse it could not doe him die,
Till he should die his last, that is, eter-
nally.

CANTO X

Her faithfull knight faire Una brings
To House of Holinesse,
Where he is taught repentaunce, and
The way to heavenly blesse.

I

WHAT man is he, that boasts of fleshly
might,
And vaine assurance of mortality,
Which, all so soone as it doth come to
fight

Against spirituell foes, yields by and by,
Or from the felds most cowardly doth
fly?

Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory.
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and
eke will.

II

By that which lately hapned, Una saw
That this her knight was feeble, and too
faint;

And all his sinewes woxen weake and
raw,

Through long enprisonment, and hard con-
straint,

Which he endured in his late restraint,
That yet he was unfitt for bloody fight:
Therefore to cherish him with diets daint,
She cast to bring him, where he chearen
might,

Till he recovered had his late decayed
plight.

III

There was an auncient house not far away,
Renownd throughout the world for sacred
lore

And pure unspotted life: so well, they say,
It governd was, and guided evermore,
Through wisdoms of a matrone grave and
hore;

Whose onely joy was to relieve the needes
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpe-
lesse pore:

All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,
And all the day in doing good and godly
deedes.

IV

Dame Cælia men did her call, as thought
From heaven to come, or thether to arise;

The mother of three daughters, well up-
brought

In goodly thewes, and godly exercise:
The eldest two, most sober, chaste, and wise,
Fidelia and Speranza, virgins were,
Though spoused, yet wanting wedlocks sol-
emnize;

But faire Charissa to a lovely fere
Was lincked, and by him had many pledges
dere.

V

Arrived there, the dore they find fast
lockt;

For it was warely watched night and day,
For feare of many foes: but when they
knockt,

The porter opened unto them streight way.
He was an aged syre, all hory gray,
With looks full lowly cast, and gate full
slow,

Wont on a staffe his feeble steps to stay,
Hight Humilté. They passe in, stouping
low;

For streight and narrow was the way which
he did shew.

VI

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin;
But entred in, a spacious court they see,
Both plaine and pleasaunt to be walked in,
Where them does meete a francklin faire
and free,

And entertaines with comely courteous
glee:

His name was Zele, that him right well
became;

For in his speeches and behaveour hee
Did labour lively to expresse the same,
And gladly did them guide, till to the hall
they came.

VII

There fayrely them receives a gentle squire,
Of myld demeanure and rare courtesee,
Right cleanly clad in comely sad attyre;
In word and deede that shewd great mod-
estee,

And knew his good to all of each degree;
Hight Reverence. He them with speeches
meet

Does faire entreat; no courting nicetee,
But simple trow, and eke unfained sweet,
As might become a squire so great persons
to greet.

VIII

And afterwarde them to his dame he
 leades,
 That aged dame, the lady of the place:
 Who all this while was busy at her beades:
 Which doen, she up arose with seemely
 grace,
 And toward them full matronely did pace.
 Where when that fairest Una she beheld,
 Whom well she knew to spring from
 heavenly race,
 Her heart with joy unwonted inly sweld,
 As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker
 eke:

IX

And her embracing, said: 'O happy earth,
 Whereon thy innocent feet doe ever tread,
 Most vertuous virgin, borne of heavenly
 berth,
 That to redeeme thy woofull parents head
 From tyrans rage, and ever-dying dread,
 Hast wandred through the world now long
 a day,
 Yett ceasest not thy weary soles to lead!
 What grace hath thee now hether brought
 this way?
 Or doest thy feeble feet unweeting hether
 stray?

X

'Strange thing it is an errant knight to see
 Here in this place, or any other wight,
 That hether turnes his steps: so few there
 bee,
 That chosse the narrow path, or seeke the
 right:
 All keepe the broad high way, and take de-
 light
 With many rather for to goe astray,
 And be partakers of their evill plight,
 Then with a few to walke the rightest way.
 O foolish men! why hast ye to your owne
 decay?'

XI

'Thy selfe to see, and tyred limbes to rest,
 O matrone sage,' quoth she, 'I hether
 came,
 And this good knight his way with me ad-
 drest,
 Lodd with thy prayeses and broad-blazed
 fame,
 That up to heven is blowne.' The auncient
 dame

Him goodly greeted in her modest guyse,
 And entertheynd them both, as best became,
 With all the court'sies that she could de-
 vyse,
 Ne wanted ought, to shew her bounteous
 or wise.

XII

Thus as they gan of sondrie thinges devise,
 Loel two most goodly virgins came in place,
 Ylinked arme in arme in lovely wise;
 With countenance demure, and modest
 grace,
 They numbred even steps and equall pace:
 Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
 Like sunny-beames threw from her christall
 face,
 That could have dazd the rash beholders
 sight,
 And round about her head did shine like
 hevens light.

XIII

She was araied all in lilly white,
 And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,
 With wine and water fild up to the hight,
 In which a serpent did himselfe enfold,
 That horreur made to all that did behold;
 But she no whitt did chaunge her constant
 mood:
 And in her other hand she fast did hold
 A booke that was both signd and seald with
 blood,
 Wherin darke things were writt, hard to
 be understood.

XIV

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
 Was clad in blew, that her beseemed well:
 Not all so chearefull seemed she of sight,
 As was her sister; whether dread did dwell,
 Or anguish, in her hart, is hard to tell:
 Upon her arme a silver anchor lay,
 Whereon she leaned ever, as befell:
 And ever up to heven, as she did pray,
 Her stedfast eyes were bent, ne swarved
 other way.

XV

They, seeing Una, towards her gan wend,
 Who them encounters with like courtesee;
 Many kind speeches they betweene them
 spend,
 And greatly joy each other well to see:
 Then to the knight with shamefast modestie

They turne themselves, at Unacs meeke request,
 And him salute with well beseeeming glee;
 Who faire them quites, as him beseeemed best,
 And goodly gan discourse of many a noble gest.

XVI

Then Una thus: 'But she your sister deare,
 The deare Charissa, where is she become?
 Or wants she health, or busie is elsewhere?'
 'Ah no,' said they, 'but forth she may not come:

For she of late is lightned of her wombe,
 And hath encreast the world with one sonne more,

That her to see should be but troublesome.'
 'Indeed,' quoth she, 'that should her trouble sore;

But thank't be God, and her encrease so evermore.'

XVII

Then saide the aged Cœlia: 'Deare dame,
 And you, good sir, I wote that of youre toyle

And labors long, through which ye hether came,

Ye both forwearied be: therefore a while
 I read you rest, and to your bowres recoyle.'

Then called she a groome, that forth him ledd

Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoile
 Of puissant armes, and laid in easie bedd:
 His name was meeke Obedience rightfully aredd.

XVIII

Now when their wearie limbes with kindly rest,

And bodies were refresht with dew repast,
 Fayre Una gan Fidelia fayre request,

To have her knight into her schoolehous plaste,

That of her heavenly learning he might taste,

And heare the wisdom of her wordes di-vine.

She granted, and that knight so much agraste,

That she him taught celestiall discipline,
 And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine.

XIX

And that her sacred Booke, with blood ywritt,

That none could reade, except she did them teach,

She unto him disclosed every whitt,
 And heavenly documents thereout did preach,

That weaker witt of man could never reach,
 Of God, of grace, of justice, of free will,
 That wonder was to heare her goodly speech:

For she was hable with her wordes to kill,
 And rayse againe to life the hart that she did thrill.

XX

And when she list poure out her larger spright,

She would commaund the hasty sunne to stay,

Or backward turne his course from hevens hight:

Sometimes great hostes of men she could dismay;

Dry-shod to passe, she parts the fouds in tway;

And eke huge mountaines from their native seat

She would commaund, themselves to beare away,

And throw in raging sea with roaring threat:
 Almighty God her gave such powre and puissaunce great.

XXI

The faithfull knight now grew in litle space,

By hearing her, and by her sisters lore,
 To such perfection of all heavenly grace,

That wretched world he gan for to abhore,
 And mortall life gan loath, as thing forlore,

Greevd with remembrance of his wicked wayes,

And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore,

That he desire to end his wretched dayes:
 So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soule dismayes.

XXII

But wise Speranza gave him comfort sweet,
 And taught him how to take assured hold

Upon her silver anchor, as was meet;
 Els had his sinnes so great and manifold

Made him forget all that Fidelia told.
In this distressed doubtfull agony,
When him his dearest Una did behold,
Disdeining life, desiring leave to dye,
She found her self assayld with great perplexity:

XXIII

And came to Cœlia to declare her smart;
Who, well acquainted with that commune plight,
Which sinfull horror workes in wounded hart,
Her wisely comforted all that she might,
With goodly counsell and advisement right;
And streightway sent with carefull diligence,
To fetch a leach, the which had great insight
In that disease of grieved conscience,
And well could cure the same: his name was Patience.

XXIV

Who, comming to that sowle-diseased knight,
Could hardly him intreat to tell his grief:
Which knowne, and all that noyd his heavie spright
Well searcht, eftsoones he gan apply relief
Of salves and med'cines, which had passing prief,
And there to added wordes of wondrous might:
By which to ease he him recured brief,
And much aswag'd the passion of his plight,
That he his paine endur'd, as seeming now more light.

XXV

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,
Inward corruption and infected sin,
Not purg'd nor heald, behind remained still,
And festring sore did ranckle yett within,
Close creeping twixt the marow and the skin.
Which to extirpe, he laid him privily
Downe in a darksome lowly place far in,
Whereas he meant his corrosives to apply,
And with streight diet tame his stubborne malady.

XXVI

In ashes and sackcloth he did array
His daintie corse, proud humors to abate,

And dieted with fasting every day,
The swelling of his woundes to mitigate,
And made him pray both earely and eke late:

And ever as superfluous flesh did rott,
Amendment readie still at hand did wayt,
To pluck it out with pineers fyrie whott,
That soone in him was lefte no one corrupted jott.

XXVII

And bitter Penaunce, with an yron whip,
Was wont him once to disple every day:
And sharpe Remorse his hart did prick and nip,
That drops of blood thence like a well did play:
And sad Repentance used to embay
His body in salt water smarting sore,
The filthy blottes of sin to wash away.
So in short space they did to health restore
The man that would not live, but erst lay at deathes dore.

XXVIII

In which his torment often was so great,
That like a lyon he would cry and rore,
And rend his flesh, and his owne synewes eat.
His owne deare Una, hearing evermore
His ruefull shriekes and gronings, often tore
Her guiltlesse garments and her golden heare,
For pittie of his payne and anguish sore;
Yet all with patience wisely she did beare;
For well she wist, his cryme could els be never cleare.

XXIX

Whom, thus recover'd by wise Patience
And trew Repentaunce, they to Una brought;
Who, joyous of his cured conscience,
Him dearely kist, and fayrely eke besought
Himselfe to chearish, and consuming thought
To put away out of his carefull brest.
By this Charissa, late in child-bed brought,
Was woxen strong, and left her fruitfull nest;
To her fayre Una brought this unacquainted guest.

XXX

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easie to compare;
Full of great love, but Cupids wanton snare
As hell she hated, chaste in worke and will;
Her necke and breasts were ever open bare,
That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill:

The rest was all in yellow robes arrayed still.

XXXI

A multitude of babes about her hong,
Playing their sportes, that joyd her to behold;

Whom still she fed, whiles they were weak and young,

But thrust them forth still, as they waxed old:

And on her head she wore a tyre of gold,
Adorn'd with gemmes and owches wondrous fayre,

Whose passing price uneath was to be told;
And by her syde there sate a gentle payre
Of turtle doves, she sitting in an yvory chayre.

XXXII

The knight and Una, entring, fayre her greet,

And bid her joy of that her happy brood;
Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet,

And entertaynes with friendly chearefull mood.

Then Una her besought, to be so good
As in her vertuous rules to schoole her knight,

Now after all his torment well withstood,
In that sad house of Penauce, where his spright

Had past the paines of hell and long enduring night.

XXXIII

She was right joyious of her just request,
And taking by the hand that Faeries sonne,
Gan him instruct in everie good behest,
Of love, and righteousnes, and well to donne,

And wrath and hatred warely to shonne,
That drew on men Gods hatred and his wrath,

And many soules in dolours had fordonne:

In which when him she well instructed hath,
From thence to heaven she teacheth him the ready path.

XXXIV

Wherein his weaker wandring steps to guyde,

An auncient matrone she to her does call,
Whose sober lookes her wisdom well descryde:

Her name was Mercy, well knowne over all
To be both gratus and eke liberall:

To whom the carefull charge of him she gave,

To leade aright, that he should never fall
In all his waies through this wide worldes wave,

That Mercy in the end his righteous soule might save.

XXXV

The godly matrone by the hand him beares
Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,
Scattered with bushy thornes and ragged breares,

Which still before him she remov'd away,
That nothing might his ready passage stay:
And ever when his feet encombr'd were,
Or gan to shrinke, or from the right to stray,

She held him fast, and firmly did upbeare,
As carefull nourse her child from falling oft does reare.

XXXVI

Eftsoones unto an holy hospitall,
That was foreby the way, she did him bring,

In which seven bead-men, that had vowed all

Their life to service of high heavens King,
Did spend their daies in doing godly thing:
Their gates to all were open evermore,
That by the wearie way were travelling,
And one sate wayting ever them before,
To call in commers by, that needy were and pore.

XXXVII

The first of them, that eldest was and best,
Of all the house had charge and government,

As guardian and steward of the rest:
His office was to give entertainment

And lodging unto all that came and went:
Not unto such, as could him feast againe,
And double quite for that he on them spent,
But such as want of harbour did constraîne:
Those for Gods sake his dewty was to
entertaine.

XXXVIII

The second was as almner of the place:
His office was, the hungry for to feed,
And thirsty give to drinke, a worke of grace:
He feared not once him selfe to be in need,
Ne ear'd to heord for those whom he did
breede:

The grace of God he layd up still in store,
Which as a stocke he left unto his seede;
He had enough; what need him care for
more?

And had he lesse, yet some he would give
to the pore.

XXXIX

The third had of their wardrobe custody,
In which were not rich tyres, nor garments
gay,

The plumes of pride, and winges of vanity,
But clothes meet to keepe keene cold away,
And naked nature seemely to aray;
With which bare wretched wights he dayly
clad,

The images of God in earthly clay;
And if that no spare clothes to give he had,
His owne cote he would cut, and it dis-
tribute glad.

XL

The fourth appointed by his office was,
Poore prisoners to relieve with gracious ayd,
And captives to redeeme with price of bras,
From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had
stayd;

And though they faulty were, yet well he
wayd,

That God to us forgiveth every howre
Much more then that, why they in bands
were layd,

And He, that harrowd hell with heavie
stowe,

The faulty soules from thence brought to
his heavenly bowre.

XLI

The fift had charge sick persons to attend,
And comfort those, in point of death which
lay;

For them most needeth comfort in the end,
When sin, and hell, and death doe most
dismay

The feeble soule departing hence away.

All is but lost, that living we bestow,

If not well ended at our dying day.

O man, have mind of that last bitter throw;

For as the tree does fall, so lyes it ever
low.

XLII

The sixt had charge of them now being
dead,

In seemely sort their corses to engrave,
And deck with dainty flowres their brydall
bed,

That to their heavenly spouse both sweet
and brave

They might appeare, when he their soules
shall save.

The wondrous workmanship of Gods owne
mould,

Whose face He made, all beastes to feare,
and gave

All in his hand, even dead we honour should.

Ah! dearest God me graunt, I dead be not
defould.

XLIII

The seventh, now after death and buriall
done,

Had charge the tender orphans of the dead
And wydowes ayd, least they should be un-
done:

In face of judgement he their right would
plead,

Ne ought the powre of mighty men did
dread

In their defence, nor would for gold or fee
Be wonne their rightfull causes downe to
tread:

And when they stood in most necessitee,
He did supply their want, and gave them
ever free.

XLIV

There when the Elfin knight arrived was,
The first and chiefest of the seven, whose
care

Was guests to welcome, towardes him did
pas:

Where seeing Mercie, that his steps upbare
And alwaies led, to her with reverence rare
He humbly louted in meeke lowlinease,
And seemely welcome for her did prepare:

For of their order she was patronesse,
Albe Charissa were their chiefest founde-
esse.

XLV

There she awhile him stayes, him selfe to
rest,

That to the rest more hable he might bee:
During which time, in every good behest
And godly worke of almes and charitee
Shee him instructed with great industree:
Shortly therein so perfect he became,
That, from the first unto the last degree,
His mortall life he learned had to frame
In holy righteousnesse, without rebuke or
blame.

XLVI

Thence forward by that painfull way they
pas,
Forth to an hill, that was both steepe and
hy;

On top whereof a sacred chappell was,
And eke a litle hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lie,
That day and night said his devotion,
Ne other worldly busines did apply:
His name was Heavenly Contemplation;
Of God and goodnes was his meditation.

XLVII

Great grace that old man to him given had;
For God he often saw from heavens hight,
All were his earthly eien both blint and
bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly
sight,
Yet wondrous quick and persaunt was his
spright,
As eagles eie, that can behold the sunne.
That hill they scale with all their powre
and might,
That his fraile thighes, nigh weary and for-
donne,
Gan faile; but by her helpe the top at last
he wonne.

XLVIII

There they doe finde that godly aged sire,
With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders
shed,
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy branches of an oke halfe ded.
Each bone might through his body well be
red,

And every sinew seene, through his long
fast:

For nought he car'd his carcas long unfed;
His mind was full of spirituall repast,
And pyn'd his flesh, to keepe his body low
and chast.

XLIX

Who, when these two approaching he aspid,
At their first presence grew agrieved sore,
That forst him lay his hevenly thoughts
aside;

And had he not that dame respected more,
Whom highly he did reverence and adore,
He would not once have moved for the
knight.

They him saluted, standing far afore;
Who, well them greeting, humbly did re-
quight,
And asked, to what end they clomb that
tedious hight.

L

'What end,' quoth she, 'should cause us
take such paine,
But that same end, which every living
wight
Should make his marke, high heaven to
attaine ?

Is not from hence the way, that leadeth
right

To that most glorious house, that glistreth
bright

With burning starres and everliving fire,
Whereof the keies are to thy hand behight
By wise Fidelia ? Shee doth thee require,
To shew it to this knight, according his
desire.'

LI

'Thrise happy man,' said then the father
grave,

'Whose staggering steps thy steady hand
doth lead,

And shewes the way, his sinfull soule to
save !

Who better can the way to heaven aread
Then thou thy selfe, that was both borne
and bred

In hevenly throne, where thousand angels
shine ?

Thou doest the praiers of the righteous sead
Present before the Majesty Divine,
And His avenging wrath to clemency in-
cline.

LII

'Yet, since thou bidst, thy pleasure shalbe donne.

Then come, thou man of earth, and see the way,

That never yet was seeme of Faries sonne,
That never leads the traveller astray,
But, after labors long and sad delay,
Brings them to joyous rest and endlesse blis.

But first thou must a season fast and pray,
Till from her bands the spright assoiled is,
And have her strength recur'd from fraile infirmitis.'

LIII

That done, he leads him to the highest mount;

Such one, as that same mighty man of God,
That blood-red billowes like a walled front
On either side disparted with his rod,
Till that his army dry-foot through them yod,

Dwelt forty daies upon; where writt in stone

With bloody letters by the hand of God,
The bitter doome of death and balefull mone

He did receive, whiles flashing fire about him shone.

LIV

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full hie,

Adorn'd with fruitfull olives all arownd,
Is, as it were for endlesse memory

Of that deare Lord, who oft thereon was fownd,

For ever with a flowing girlond crown'd:
Or like that pleasaunt mount, that is for ay

Through famous poets verse each where renown'd,

On which the thrise three learned ladies play

Their heavenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay.

LV

From thence, far off he unto him did shew
A litle path, that was both steepe and long,

Which to a goodly citty led his vew;
Whose wals and towres were builded high

and strong
Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong

Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
Too high a ditty for my simple song:
The Citty of the Greate King hight it well,
Wherein eternall peace and happinesse doth dwell.

LVI

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
The blessed angels to and fro descend
From highest heaven, in gladsome companee,
And with great joy into that citty wend,
As commonly as frend does with his frend.
Whereat he wondred much, and gan en-
quare,

What stately building durst so high extend
Her lofty towres unto the starry sphere,
And what unknown nation there empeopled were.

LVII

'Faire knight,' quoth he, 'Hierusalem that is,

The New Hierusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in, that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt,
With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt

On cursed tree, of that unspotted Lam,
That for the sinnes of al the world was kilt:
Now are they saints all in that citty sam,
More dear unto their God, then younglings to their dam.'

LVIII

'Till now,' said then the knight, 'I weened well,

That great Cleopolis, where I have beene,
In which that fairest Fary Queene doth dwell,

The fairest citty was, that might be seeme;
And that bright towre all built of christall clene,

Panthea, seemd the brightest thing that was:

But now by prooffe all otherwise I weene;
For this great citty that does far surpas,
And this bright angels towres quite dims
that towre of glas.'

LIX

'Most trew,' then said the holy aged man;
'Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame,
The fairest peece that eie beholden can:
And well beseemes all knights of noble name,

That covett in th' immortall booke of fame
To be eternized, that same to haunt,
And doen their service to that soveraigne
dame,

That glory does to them for guerdon graunt:
For she is heavenly borne, and heaven may
justly vaunt.

LX

'And thou, faire ymp, sprong out from
English race,

How ever now accompted Elfin sonne,
Well worthy doest thy service for her grace,
To aide a virgin desolate foredonne.

But when thou famous victory hast wonne,
And high amongst all knights hast hong thy
shield,

Thenceforth the suitt of earthly conquest
shonne,

And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody
field.

For blood can nought but sin, and wars but
sorrows yield.

LXI

Then seek this path, that I to thee presage,
Which after all to heaven shall thee send;
Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
To yonder same Hierusalem doe bend,
Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end:
For thou, amongst those saints whom thou
doest see,

Shalt be a saint, and thine owne nations
frend

And patrone: thou *Saint George* shalt
called bee,

Saint George of mery *England*, the signe
of victoree.'

LXII

'Unworthy wretch,' quoth he, 'of so great
grace,

How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?'
'These, that have it attaynd, were in like
case,'

Quoth he, 'as wretched, and liv'd in like
paine.'

'But deeds of armes must I at last be faine
And ladies love to leave, so dearely bought?'

'What need of armes, where peace doth ay
remaine,'

Said he, 'and battailes none are to be
fought?

As for loose loves, they' are vaine, and
vanish into nought.'

LXIII

'O let me not,' quoth he, 'then turne againe
Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse
are,

But let me heare for aie in peace remaine,
Or streight way on that last long voiage
fare,

That nothing may my present hope empare.'
'That may not be,' said he, 'ne maist thou
yitt

Forgoe that royal maides bequeathed care,
Who did her cause into thy hand committ,
Till from her cursed foe thou have her
freely quitt.'

LXIV

'Then shall I soone,' quoth he, 'so God me
grace,

Abett that virgins cause disconsolate,
And shortly back returne unto this place,
To walke this way in pilgrims poore estate.

But now aread, old father, why of late
Didst thou behight me borne of English
blood,

Whom all a Faeries sonne doen nominate?'

'That word shall I,' said he, 'avouchen
good,
Sith to thee is unknowne the cradle of thy
brood.

LXV

'For well I wote, thou springst from ancient
race

Of Saxon kinges, that have with mightie
hand

And many bloody battailes fought in place
High reard their royall throne in Britane
land,

And vanquisht them, unable to withstand:
From thence a Faery thee unweeting reft,
There as thou slepst in tender swadling
band,

And her base Elfin brood there for thee
left:

Such men do chaungelings call, so chaungd
by Faeries theft.

LXVI

'Thence she thee brought into this Faery
lond,

And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde;
Where thee a ploughman all unweeting
fond,

As he his toylesome teme that way did
guyde,

And brought thee up in ploughmans state
to byde,

Whereof Georgos he thee gave to name;
Till prickt with courage, and thy forces
pryde,

To Fary court thou cam'st to seeke for
fame,

And prove thy puissaunt armes, as seemes
thee best became.'

LXVII

'O holy sire,' quoth he, 'how shall I quight
The many favours I with thee have fownd,
That hast my name and nation redd aright,
And taught the way that does to heaven
bownd?'

This saide, adowne he looked to the grownd,
To have returnd, but dazed were his eyne,
Through passing brightnes, which did quite
confound

His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne:
So darke are earthly thinges compar'd to
things divine.

LXVIII

At last, whenas himselfe he gan to fynd,
To Una back he cast him to retyre;
Who him awaited still with pensive mynd.
Great thankes and goodly meed to that
good syre

He thens departing gave, for his paynes
hyre.

So came to Una, who him joyd to see,
And after litle rest, gan him desyre,
Of her adventure myndfull for to bee.
So leave they take of Cœlia and her daugh-
ters three.

CANTO XI

The knight with that old Dragon fights
Two dayes incessantly:
The third, him overthrowes, and gayns
Most glorious victory.

I

High time now gan it wex for Una fayre
To thinke of those her captive parents deare,
And their forwasted kingdom to repayre:
Whereto whenas they now approached neare,
With hartie wordes her knight she gan to
cheare,

And in her modest maner thus bespake:
'Deare knight, as deare as ever knight was
deare,

That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heaven behold the tedious toyle, ye for
me take.

II

'Now are we come unto my native soyle,
And to the place, where all our perilles
dwell;

Here hauntes that feend, and does his dayly
spoyle;

Therefore henceforth bee at your keeping
well,

And ever ready for your foeman fell.

The sparke of noble corage now awake,
And strive your excellent selfe to excell;
That shall ye evermore renowned make
Above all knights on earth, that batteill
undertake.'

III

And pointing forth, 'Lo! yonder is,' said
she,

'The brasen towre, in which my parents
deare

For dread of that huge feend emprisond be;
Whom I from far see on the walles appeare,
Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly
cheare:

And on the top of all I do espye
The watchman wayting tydings glad to
heare;

That, O my parents, might I happily
Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery!'

IV

With that they heard a roaring hideous
sownd,

That all the ayre with terror filled wyde,
And seemd unceath to shake the stedfast
ground.

Eftsoones that dreadfull dragon they espyde,
Where stretcht he lay upon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill.
But all so soone as he from far descryde
Those glistring armes, that heaven with
light did fill,

He rousd himselfe full blyth, and hastned
them untill.

V

Then badd the knight his lady yede aloof,
And to an hill her selfe withdraw asyde,
From whence she might behold that bat-
tailles proof,

And eke be safe from daunger far descryde:

She him obeyd, and turnd a litle wyde.
 Now, O thou sacred Muse, most learned
 dame,
 Fayre ympe of Phoebus, and his aged bryde,
 The nurse of time and everlasting fame,
 That warlike handes ennoblest with im-
 mortall name;

VI

O gently come into my feeble brest,
 Come gently, but not with that mightie rage,
 Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest
 infest,
 And hartes of great heroës doest enrage,
 That nought their kindled corage may
 aswage:
 Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to
 sownd,
 The god of warre with his fiers equipage
 Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd,
 And scared nations doest with horror sterne
 astownd.

VII

Fayre goddess, lay that furious fitt asyde,
 Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing,
 And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood be-
 dyde,
 Twixt that great Faery Queene and Paynim
 King,
 That with their horror heven and earth did
 ring,
 A worke of labour long, and endlesse
 prayse:
 But now a while lett downe that haughtie
 string,
 And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
 That I this man of God his godly armes
 may blaze.

VIII

By this the dreadfull beast drew nigh to
 hand,
 Halfe flying and halfe footing in his haste,
 That with his largenesse measured much
 land,
 And made wide shadow under his huge
 waste;
 As mountaine doth the valley overcaste.
 Approching nigh, he reared high afore
 His body monstrous, horrible, and vaste,
 Which, to increase his wondrous greatnes
 more,
 Was swoln with wrath, and poyson, and with
 bloody gore.

IX

And over, all with brasen scales was armd,
 Like plated cote of steele, so couched neare,
 That nought mote percee, ne might his corse
 bee harmd
 With dint of sward, nor push of pointed
 speare:
 Which as an eagle, seeing pray appeare,
 His aery plumes doth rouze, full rudely
 dight,
 So shaked he, that horror was to heare:
 For as the clashing of an armor bright,
 Such noyse his roused scales did send unto
 the knight.

X

His flaggy winges, when forth he did dis-
 play,
 Were like two sayles, in which the hollow
 wynd
 Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
 And eke the pennes, that did his pineons
 bynd,
 Were like mayne-yardes, with flying canvas
 lynd,
 With which whenas him list the ayre to
 beat,
 And there by force unwonted passage fynd,
 The clowdes before him fiedd for terror
 great,
 And all the heavens stood still, amazed with
 his threat.

XI

His huge long tayle, wownd up in hundred
 foldes,
 Does overspred his long bras-scaly back,
 Whose wreathed boughtes when ever he
 unfolds,
 And thicke entangled knots adown does
 slack,
 Bespotted as with shieldes of red and blacke,
 It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
 And of three furlongs does but little lacke;
 And at the point two stinges in fixed arre,
 Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steele ex-
 ceeden farr.

XII

But stinges and sharpest steele did far ex-
 ceed
 The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clawes:
 Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
 What ever thing does touch his ravenous
 pawes,

Or what within his reach he ever drawes.
But his most hideous head my tongue to
tell
Does tremble; for his deepe devouring
jaws
Wyde gaped, like the griesly mouth of
hell,
Through which into his darke abysses all
ravin fell.

XIII

And, that more wondrous was, in either
jaw
Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged
were,
In which yett trickling blood and gobbets
raw
Of late devoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bredd cold congealed
feare:
Which to increase, and all atonce to kill,
A cloud of smothering smoke and sulphure
seare
Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed
still,
That all the ayre about with smoke and
stench did fill.

XIV

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining
shields,
Did burne with wrath, and sparkled living
fyre;
As two broad beacons, sett in open fieldes,
Send forth their flames far of to every
shyre,
And warning give, that enimies conspyre
With fire and sword the region to invade;
So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous
yre:
But far within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lampes were sett, that made
a dreadfull shade.

XV

So dreadfully he towards him did pas,
Forelifing up a loft his speckled brest,
And often bounding on the brused gras,
As for great joyaunce of his newcome
guest.
Esteemes he gan advaunce his haughty
crest,
As chauffed bore his bristles doth upreare,
And shoke his scales to battaile ready
drest,

That made the Redcrosse Knight nigh
quake for feare,
As bidding bold defyaunce to his foeman
neare.

XVI

The knight gan fayrely couch his steady
speare,
And fierseely ran at him with rigorous
might:
The pointed steele, arriving rudely theare,
His harder hyde would nether perce nor
bight,
But, glauncing by, fourth passed forward
right:
Yet, sore amoved with so puissaunt push,
The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
With his long taylor, that horse and man to
ground did rush.

XVII.

Both horse and man up lightly rose againe,
And fresh encounter towards him addrest:
But th' ydle stroke yett backe recoyld in
vaine,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious beast,
To be avenged of so great despight;
For never felt his imperceable brest
So wondrous force from hand of living
wight;
Yet had he prov'd the powre of many a
puissant knight.

XVIII

Then, with his waving wings displayed
wyde,
Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong flight did forcibly divyde
The yielding ayre, which nigh too feeble
found
Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
To beare so great a weight: he, cutting
way
With his broad sayles, about him soared
round;
At last, low stouping with unweldy sway,
Snatcht up both horse and man, to beare
them quite away.

XIX

Long he them bore above the subject
plaine,
So far as ewghen bow a shaft may send,

Till struggling strong did him at last con-
straine

To let them downe before his flightes end:
As hagar hauke, presuming to contend
With hardy fowle, above his hable might,
His wearie pounces all in vaine doth spend
To trusse the pray too heavy for his flight;
Which, comming down to ground, does free
it selfe by flight.

XX

He so disseized of his gryping grosse,
The knight his thrillant speare againe
assayd

In his bras-plated body to embosse,
And three mens strength unto the stroake
he layd;

Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked, as
affrayd,

And glauncing from his scaly necke, did
glyde

Close under his left wing, then broad dis-
playd.

The percing steele there wrought a wound
full wyde,

That with the uncouth smart the monster
lowdly cryde.

XXI

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore,
When wintry storme his wrathful wreck
does threat;

The rolling billowes beat the ragged shore,
As they the earth would shoulder from her
seat,

And greedy gulfe does gape, as he would
eat

His neighbour element in his revenge:
Then gin the blustering brethren boldly threat,
To move the world from off his stedfast
henge,

And boystrous battaile make, each other to
avenge.

XXII

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh,
Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the
wood,

And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed
fresh

A gushing river of blacke gory blood,
That drowned all the land, whereon he
stood:

The streame thereof would drive a water-
mill.

Treble augmented was his furious mood
With bitter sence of his deepe rooted ill,
That flames of fire he threw forth from
his large noethril.

XXIII

His hideous taylor then hurled he about,
And therewith all enwrapt the nimble
thyres

Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage
stout

Striving to loose the knott, that fast him
tyes,

Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash im-
plyes,

That to the ground he is perforce con-
straynd

To throw his ryder: who can quickly ryse
From of the earth, with durty blood dis-
taynd,

For that reprochfull fall right fowly he
disdaynd.

XXIV

And fiercely tooke his trenchand blade in
hand,

With which he stroke so furious and so
fell,

That nothing seemd the puissaunce could
withstand:

Upon his crest the hardned yron fell;
But his more hardned crest was armd so
well,

That deeper dint therein it would not make;
Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell,
That from thenceforth he shund the like to
take,

But, when he saw them come, he did them
still forsake.

XXV

The knight was wroth to see his stroke be-
guyld,

And smot againe with more outrageous
might;

But backe againe the sparceling steele re-
coyld,

And left not any marke where it did light,
As if in adamant rocke it had beene pight.

The beast, impatient of his smarting wound,
And of so fierce and forcible despight,

Thought with his winges to stye above the
ground;

But his late wounded wing unserviceable
found.

XXVI

Then, full of griefe and anguish vehement,
 He lowdly brayd, that like was never heard,
 And from his wide devouring oven sent
 A flake of fire, that, flashing in his beard,
 Him all amazd, and almost made afeard:
 The scorching flame sore swinged all his
 face,
 And through his armour all his body seard,
 That he could not endure so cruell cace,
 But thought his armes to leave, and helmet
 to unlace.

XXVII

Not that great champion of the antique
 world,
 Whom famous poetes verse so much doth
 vaunt,
 And hath for twelve huge labours high ex-
 told,
 So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt,
 When him the poysoned garment did en-
 chaunt,
 With Centaures blood and bloody verses
 charmd,
 As did this knight twelve thousand dolours
 daunt,
 Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that erst him
 armd,
 That erst him goodly armd, now most of
 all him harmd.

XXVIII

Faynt, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved,
 brent
 With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart,
 and inward fire,
 That never man such mischiefes did tor-
 ment;
 Death better were, death did he oft desire,
 But death will never come, when needes
 require.
 Whom so diamayd when that his foe be-
 held,
 He cast to suffer him no more respire,
 But gan his sturdy sterne about to weld,
 And him so strongly stroke, that to the
 ground him feld.

XXIX

It fortun'd (as fayre it then befell.)
 Behynd his backe, unweeting, where he
 stood,
 Of auncient time there was a springing well,
 From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,

Full of great vertues, and for med'cine
 good.

Whylome, before that cursed dragon got
 That happy land, and all with innocent
 blood

Defyld those sacred waves, it rightly hot
 The Well of Life, ne yet his vertues had
 forgot.

XXX

For unto life the dead it could restore,
 And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash
 away;

Those that with sicknesse were infected
 sore

It could recure, and aged long decay
 Renew, as one were borne that very day.

Both Silo this, and Jordan, did excell,
 And th' English Bath, and eke the German
 Span,

Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus match this
 well:

Into the same the knight back overthrown
 fell.

XXXI

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe
 His fierie face in billowes of the west,
 And his faint steedes watred in ocean deepe,
 Whiles from their journall labours they did
 rest,

When that infernall monster, having kest
 His wearie foe into that living well,
 Can high advance his broad discoloured
 brest

Above his wonted pitch, with countenance
 fell,

And clapt his yron wings, as victor he did
 dwell.

XXXII

Which when his pensive lady saw from
 farre,

Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
 As weening that the sad end of the warre,
 And gan to highest God entirely pray,
 That feared chaunce from her to turne
 away:

With folded hands, and knees full lowly
 bent,

All night shee watcht, ne once adowne
 would lay

Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment,
 But praying still did wake, and waking did
 lament.

XXXIII

The morrow next gan earely to appeare,
 That Titan rose to runne his daily race;
 But earely, ere the morrow next gan reare
 Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face,
 Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,
 And looked all about, if she might spy
 Her loved knight to move his manly pace:
 For she had great doubt of his safety,
 Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

XXXIV

At last she saw, where he upstartd brave
 Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay:
 As eagle fresh out of the ocean wave,
 Where he hath left his plumes all hory
 gray,
 And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly
 gay,
 Like eyas hauke up mounts unto the skies,
 His newly budded pineons to assay,
 And merveiles at him selfe, stil as he flies:
 So new this new-borne knight to battell new
 did rise.

XXXV

Whom when the damned feend so fresh
 did spy,
 No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
 And doubted, whether his late enemy
 It were, or other new supplied knight.
 He, now to prove his late renewed might,
 High brandishing his bright deaw-burning
 blade,
 Upon his crested scalp so sore did amite,
 That to the scull a yawning wound it made:
 The deadly dint his dulled sences all dis-
 maid.

XXXVI

I wote not whether the revenging steele
 Were hardned with that holy water dew,
 Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
 Or his baptized hands now greater grew,
 Or other secret vertue did ensew;
 Els never could the force of fleshly arme,
 Ne molten mettall, in his blood embrew:
 For till that stownd could never wight him
 harme,
 By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor
 mighty charme.

XXXVII

The cruell wound enraged him so sore,
 That loud he yelled for exceeding paine;

As hundred ramping lions seemd to rore,
 Whom ravenous hunger did thereto com-
 straine:

Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched traine,
 And therewith scourge the buxome aire so
 sore,
 That to his force to yelden it was faine;
 Ne ought his sturdy strokes might stand
 afore,
 That high trees overthrew, and rocks in
 peeces tore.

XXXVIII

The same advauncing high above his head,
 With sharpe intended sting so rude him
 smott,
 That to the earth him drove, as stricken
 dead,
 Ne living wight would have him life behott:
 The mortall sting his angry needle short
 Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder
 sead,
 Where fast it stucke, ne would thereout be
 gott:
 The grieve thereof him wondrous sore dis-
 ead,
 Ne might his raneling paine with patience
 be appead.

XXXIX

But yet more mindfull of his honour deare
 Then of the grievous smart, which him did
 wring,
 From loathed soile he can him lightly reare,
 And strove to loose the far in fixed sting:
 Which when in vaine he tryde with strug-
 geling,
 Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he
 hefte,
 And strooke so strongly, that the knotty
 string
 Of his huge taile he quite a sonder cleft;
 Five joints thereof he hewd, and but the
 stump him left.

XL

Hart cannot thinke, what outrage and what
 cries,
 With fowle enfouldred smoake and flashing
 fire,
 The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the
 skies,
 That all was covered with darknesse dire:
 Then fraught with rancour, and engorged
 yre,

He cast at once him to avenge for all,
And gathering up himselfe out of the mire
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
Upon his sunne-bright shield, and grypt it
fast withall.

XLI

Much was the man encombred with his
hold,
In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
Ne wist yett how his talaunts to unfold;
For harder was from Cerberus greedy jaw
To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw
To reave by strength the griped gage away:
Thrise he assayd it from his foote to draw,
And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay;
It booted nought to thinke to robbe him of
his pray.

XLII

Tho, when he saw no power might prevaile,
His trusty sword he cald to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiersly did his foe assaile,
And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid,
As sparkles from the andvile use to fly,
When heavy hammers on the wedg are
swaid;
Therewith at last he forst him to unty
One of his grasping feete, him to defend
thereby.

XLIII

The other foote, fast fixed on his shield,
Whenas no strength nor stroks mote him
constraine
To loose, ne yet the warlike pledg to yield,
He smott thereat with all his might and
maine,
That nought so wondrous puissance might
sustaine:
Upon the joint the lucky steele did light,
And made such way, that hewd it quite in
twaine:
The paw yett missed not his minisht might,
But hong still on the shield, as it at first
was pight.

XLIV

For grieve thereof, and divelish despight,
From his infernall founnace forth he threw
Huge flames, that dimmed all the hevens
light,
Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone
blew;

As burning Aetna from his boyling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces
broke,
And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
Enwrapped in coleblacke clowds and filthy
smoke,
That al the land with stench, and heven
with horror choke.

XLV

The heate whereof, and harmefull pesti-
lence,
So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To save his body from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrailes did ex-
pire.
It chaunst (Eternall God that chaunce did
guide)
As he recoiled backward, in the mire
His nigh foreweried feeble feet did slide,
And downe he fell, with dread of shame
sore terrifide.

XLVI

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy redd,
As they in pure vermilion had beene dide,
Whereof great vertues over all were redd:
For happy life to all which thereon fedd,
And life eke everlasting did befall:
Great God it planted in that blessed stedd
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The Tree of Life, the crime of our first
fathers fall.

XLVII

In all the world like was not to be fownd,
Save in that soile, where all good things did
grow,
And freely sprong out of the fruitfull
grownd,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dredd dragon all did overthrow.
Another like faire tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof who so did eat, oftsoones did know
Both good and ill: O mournfull memory!
That tree through one mans fault hath doen
us all to dy.

XLVIII

From that first tree forth flowd, as from a
well,
A trickling streame of balme, most sover-
aine

And dainty deare, which on the ground still
fell,
And overflowed all the fertile plaine,
As it had deawed bene with timely raine:
Life and long health that gracious ointment
gave,
And deadly wounds could heale, and reare
again
The sencelesse corse appointed for the
grave.
Into that same he fell: which did from
death him save.

XLIX

For nigh thereto the ever damned beast
Durst not approch, for he was deadly
made,
And al that life preserved did detest:
Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade.
By this the drouping day-light gan to fade,
And yield his rowme to sad succeeding
night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth, and wayes of living
wight,
And high her burning torch set up in
heaven bright.

L

When gentle Una saw the second fall
Of her deare knight, who, weary of long
fight,
And faint through losse of blood, moov'd
not at all,
But lay as in a dreame of deepe delight,
Besmeard with pretious balme, whose vertu-
ous might
Did heale his woundes, and scorching heat
alay,
Again she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safetie gan devoutly pray,
And watch the noyous night, and wait for
joyous day.

LI

The joyous day gan early to appeare,
And fayre Aurora from the deawy bed
Of aged Tithone gan her selfe to reare,
With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing
red;
Her golden locks for hast were loosely
shed
About her eares, when Una her did marke
Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers
spred,

From heven high to chace the chearelesse
darke;
With mery note her lowd salutes the
mounting larks.

LII

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battaile ready dight;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To have devourd, so soone as day he spyde,
When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to feare;
Nathlesse with wonted rage he him ad-
vaunced neare.

LIII

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde,
He thought attonce him to have swallowd
quight,
And rusht upon him with outragious pryde;
Who him rencountring fierce, as hauke in
flight,
Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon
bright,
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune
might,
That deepe emperst his darksom hollow
maw,
And, backe retyrd, his life blood forth with
all did draw.

LIV

So downe he fell, and forth his life did
breath,
That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;
So downe he fell, that th' earth him under-
neath
Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
So downe he fell, as an huge rocky clift,
Whose false foundation waves have washt
away,
With dreadfull poysie is from the mayne-
land rift,
And, rolling downe, great Neptune doth
dismay;
So downe he fell, and like an heaped moun-
taine lay.

LV

The knight him selfe even trembled at his
fall,
So huge and horrible a masse it seemd;

And his deare lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approach for dread which she
misdeemd;

But yet at last, whenas the direfull feend
She saw not stirre, of-shaking vaine affright,
She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end:
Then God she prayed, and thankt her faith-
full knight,

That had atchieved so great a conquest by
his might.

CANTO XII

Payre Una to the Redcrosse Knight
Betrouthd is with joy:
Though false Duessa, it to barre,
Her false sleights doe employ.

I

BEHOLD! I see the haven nigh at hand,
To which I meane my wearie course to
bend;

Vere the maine shete, and beare up with the
land,

The which afore is fayrly to be kend,
And seemeth safe from storms that may
offend:

There this fayre virgin, wearie of her way,
Must landed bee, now at her journeyes end;
There eke my feeble barke a while may
stay,

Till mery wynd and weather call her thence
away.

II

Scarsely had Phoebus in the glooming east
Yett harnessed his fyrie-footed teeme,
Ne reard above the earth his flaming
creast,

When the last deadly smoke aloft did
steeme,

That signe of last outbreathed life did
seeme

Unto the watchman on the castle wall;
Who thereby dead that balefull beast did
deeme,

And to his lord and lady lowd gan call,
To tell, how he had seene the dragons fatall
fall.

III

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed,
That aged syre, the lord of all that land,
And looked forth, to weet if trew indeed
Those tydings were, as he did understand:

Which whenas trew by tryall he out fond,
He badd to open wyde his brasen gate,
Which long time had beene shut, and out
of hend

Proclaym'd joy and peace through all his
state;

For dead now was their foe, which them
forrayed late.

IV

Then gan triumphant trumpets sownd on
hye,

That sent to heven the echoed report
Of their new joy, and happie victory
Gainst him, that had them long opprest
with tort,

And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.
Then all the people, as in solemne feast,
To him assembled with one full consort,
Rejoycing at the fall of that great beast,
From whose eternall bondage now they
were releast.

V

Forth came that auncient lord and aged
queene,

Arayd in antique robes downe to the
grownd,

And sad habiliments right well bescene:
A noble crew about them waited rownd
Of sage and sober peres, all gravely gownd;
Whom far before did march a goodly band
Of tall young men, all hable armes to
sownd;

But now they laurell braunches bore in
hand,

Glad signe of victory and peace in all their
land.

VI

Unto that doughtie conquerour they came,
And him before themselves prostrating low,
Their lord and patrone loud did him pro-
clame,

And at his feet their lawrell boughes did
throw.

Soone after them, all dauncing on a row,
The comely virgins came, with girlands
dight,

As fresh as flowres in meadow greene doe
grow,

When morning dew upon their leaves
doth light:

And in their handes sweet timbrels all up-
held on hight.

VII

And them before, the fry of children yong
Their wanton sportes and childish mirth
did play;

And to the maydens sounting tymbrels
song.

In well attuned notes, a joyous lay,
And made delightfull musick all the way,
Untill they came where that faire virgin
stood.

As fayre Diana, in fresh sommers day,
Beholdes her nymphes enraung'd in shady
wood,

Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in
christall flood;

VIII

So she beheld those maydens meriment
With chearefull vew; who, when to her
they came,

Themselves to ground with gracious hum-
blesse bent,

And her ador'd by honorable name,
Lifting to heven her everlasting fame:

Then on her head they sett a girlond
greene,

And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt
game;

Who, in her self-resemblance well besene,
Did seeme, such as she was, a goodly
maiden queene.

IX

And after all the raskall many ran,
Heaped together in rude rablement,
To see the face of that victorious man;
Whom all admired, as from heaven sent,
And gazd upon with gaping wonderment.
But when they came where that dead
dragon lay,

Stretcht on the ground in monstrous large
extent,

The sight with ydle feare did them dis-
may,

Ne durst approach him nigh, to touch, or
once assay.

X

Some feard and fiedd; some feard, and
well it faynd;

One, that would wiser seeme then all the
rest,

Warnd him not touch, for yet perhaps re-
maynd

Some lingring life within his hollow brest,

Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden
nest

Of many dragonettes, his fruitfull seeds;

Another saide, that in his eyes did rest

Yet sparkling fyre, and badd thereof take
heed;

Another said, he saw him move his eyes
indeed.

XI

One mother, whenas her foolehardy chyld
Did come to neare, and with his talants
play,

Halfe dead through feare, her litle babe
revyld,

And to her gossibs gan in counsell say:

'How can I tell, but that his talants may
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender
hand?'

So diversly them selves in vaine they
fray;

Whiles some more bold, to measure him
nigh stand,

To prove how many acres he did spred of
land.

XII

Thus flocked all the folke him rownd
about,

The whiles that hoarie king, with all his
traine,

Being arrived where that champion stout
After his foes defeasaunce did remaine,

Him goodly greetes, and fayre does enter-
tayne

With princely gifts of yvory and gold,
And thousand thanks him yeeldes for all
his paines:

Then when his daughter deare he does be-
hold,

Her dearely doth imbrace, and kisseth
manifold.

XIII

And after to his pallace he them bringes,
With shaumes, and trompets, and with
clarions sweet;

And all the way the joyous people singes,
And with their garments strowes the paved
street;

Whence mounting up, they fynd purvey-
aunce meet

Of all that royall princes court became,
And all the floore was underneath their
feet

Bespredd with costly scarlott of great
name,
On which they lowly sitt, and fitting pur-
pose frame.

XIV

What needes me tell their feast and goodly
guize,
In which was nothing riotous nor vaine ?
What needes of dainty dishes to devise,
Of comely services, or courtly trayne ?
My narrow leaves cannot in them contayne
The large discourse of roiall princes state.
Yet was their manner then but bare and
playne:
For th' antique world excesse and pryde
did hate;
Such proud luxurious pompe is swollen up
but late.

XV

Then, when with meates and drinckes of
every kinde
Their fervent appetites they quenched had,
That auncient lord gan fit occasion finde,
Of straunge adventures, and of perils sad,
Which in his travell him befallen had,
For to demaund of his renowned guest:
Who then with utt'rance grave, and coun-
t'nance sad,
From poynt to poynt, as is before exprest,
Discourst his voyage long, according his re-
quest.

XVI

Great pleasure, mixt with pittifull regard,
That godly king and queene did passion-
ate,
Whyles they his pittifull adventures heard,
That oft they did lament his lucklesse
state,
And often blame the too importune fate,
That heaped on him so many wrathfull
wreakes;
For never gentle knight, as he of late,
So tossed was in Fortunes cruell freakes;
And all the while salt teares bedeawd the
bearers cheeks.

XVII

Then sayd the royall pere in sober wise:
'Deare sonne, great beene the evils which
ye bore
From first to last in your late enterprise,
That I note whether praise or pitty more:

For never living man, I weene, so sore
In sea of deadly daungers was distrest;
But since now safe ye seised have the shore,
And well arrived are, (High God be blest !)
Let us devise of ease and everlasting rest.'

XVIII

'Ah ! dearest lord,' said then that doughty
knight,
'Of ease or rest I may not yet devise;
For by the faith which I to armes have
plight,
I bownden am streight after this emprise,
As that your daughter can ye well advize,
Backe to retourne to that great Faery
Queene,
And her to serve sixe yeares in warlike wize,
Gainst that proud Paynim King that works
her teene:
Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there
have beene.'

XIX

'Unhappy falls that hard necessity,'
Quoth he, 'the troubler of my happy peace,
And vowed foe of my felicity;
Ne I against the same can justly preace:
But since that band ye cannot now release,
Nor doen undoe, (for vowes may not be
vayne)
Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall
cease,
Ye then shall hether backe retourne agayne,
The marriage to accomplish vowd betwixt
you twayn.

XX

'Which, for my part, I covet to performe,
In sort as through the world I did pro-
clame,
That who so kild that monster most de-
forme,
And him in hardy battayle overcame,
Should have mine onely daughter to his
dame,
And of my kingdome heyre apparaunt bee:
Therefore since now to thee perteynes the
same,
By dew desert of noble chevalrees,
Both daughter and eke kingdome, lo ! I
yield to thee.'

XXI

Then forth he called that his daughter fayre,
The fairest Un', his onely daughter deare,

His onely daughter and his only hayre;
 Who forth proceeding with sad sober
 cheare,
 As bright as doth the morning starre ap-
 peare
 Out of the east, with flaming lockes be-
 dight,
 To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
 And to the world does bring long wished
 light;
 So faire and fresh that lady shewd her selfe
 in sight:

XXII

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in
 May;
 For she had layd her mournefull stole
 aside,
 And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,
 Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did
 hide,
 Whiles on her wearie journey she did ride;
 And on her now a garment she did weare
 All lilly white, withoutten spot or pride,
 That seemd like silke and silver woven
 neare,
 But neither silke nor silver therein did
 appeare.

XXIII

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties
 beame,
 And glorious light of her sunshyny face,
 To tell, were as to strive against the
 streame:
 My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace,
 Her heavenly lineaments far to enchace.
 Ne wonder; for her own deare loved knight,
 All were she daily with himselfe in place,
 Did wonder much at her celestially sight:
 Oft had he seene her faire, but never so
 faire dight.

XXIV

So fairly dight, when she in presence came,
 She to her syre made humble reverence,
 And bowed low, that her right well be-
 came,
 And added grace unto her excellence:
 Who with great wisdom and grave elo-
 quence
 Thus gan to say — But eare he thus had
 sayd,
 With flying speede, and seeming great
 pretence,

Came running in, much like a man dismayd,
 A messenger with letters, which his message
 sayd.

XXV

All in the open hall amazed stood
 At suddainnesse of that unwary sight,
 And wondred at his breathlesse hasty mood.
 But he for nought would stay his passage
 right,
 Till fast before the king he did alight;
 Where falling flat, great humblesse he did
 make,
 And kist the ground whereon his foot was
 pight;
 Then to his handes that writt he did betake,
 Which he disclosing, read thus, as the paper
 spake:

XXVI

'To thee, most mighty king of Eden fayre,
 Her greeting sends in these sad lines ad-
 drest
 The wofull daughter and forsaken heyre
 Of that great Emperour of all the West;
 And bids thee be advized for the best,
 Ere thou thy daughter linck in holy band
 Of wedlocke to that new unknownen guest:
 For he already plighted his right hand
 Unto another love, and to another land.

XXVII

'To me, sad mayd, or rather widow sad,
 He was affyaunced long time before,
 And sacred pledges he both gave, and had,
 False erraunt knight, infamous, and for-
 swore!
 Witnesse the burning altars, which he swore,
 And guilty heavens of his bold perjury,
 Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
 Yet I to them for judgement just doe fly,
 And them conjure t' avenge this shamefull
 injury.

XXVIII

'Therefore since mine he is, or free or bond,
 Or false or trow, or living or else dead,
 Withhold, O soverayne prince, your hasty
 hond
 From knitting league with him, I you aread;
 Ne weene my right with strength adowne
 to tread,
 Through weakenesse of my widowed or woe:
 For Truth is strong, her rightfull cause to
 plead,

And shall finde friends, if need requireth
soe.

So bids thee well to fare, thy neither friend
nor foe, FIDESSA.'

XXIX

When he these bitter byting wordes had
red,
The tydings straunge did him abashed
make,

That still he sate long time astonished,
As in great muse, no word to creature
spake.

At last his solemne silence thus he brake,
With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his
guest:

'Redoubted knight, that for myne only
sake

Thy life and honor late adventurst,
Let nought be hid from me, that ought to
be exprest.

XXX

'What meane these bloody vowes and idle
threats,

Throwne out from womanish impatient
mynd ?

What hevens ? what altars ? what enraged
beates,

Here heaped up with termes of love un-
kynd,

My conscience cleare with guilty bands
would bynd ?

High God be witnesse, that I guiltlesse
ame !

But if your selfe, sir knight, ye faulty fynd,
Or wrapped be in loves of former dame,
With cryme doe not it cover, but disclose
the same.'

XXXI

To whom the Redcrosse Knight this answered
sent:

'My lord, my king, be nought hereat dis-
mayd,

Till well ye wote by grave intendiment,
What woman, and wherefore, doth me up-
brayd

With breach of love and loialty betrayd.
It was in my mishape, as hitherward
I lately traveld, that unwares I strayd
Out of my way, through perils straunge
and hard;

That day should faile me ere I had them
all declar'd.

XXXII

'There did I find, or rather I was fownd
Of this false woman, that Fidessa hight;
Fidessa hight the falsest dame on grownd,
Most false Duesssa, royall richly dight,
That easy was t' inveigle weaker sight:
Who by her wicked arts and wiely skill,
Too false and strong for earthly skill or
might,
Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared
ill.'

XXXIII

Then stepped forth the goodly royall mayd,
And on the ground her selfe prostrating low,
With sober countenance thus to him sayd:
'O pardon me, my souveraine lord, to sheow
The secret treasons, which of late I know
To have bene wrought by that false sor-
ceresse.

Shee, onely she, it is, that earst did throw
This gentle knight into so great distresse,
That death him did awaite in daily wretch-
ednesse.

XXXIV

'And now it seemes, that she suborned hath
This crafty messenger with letters vaine,
To worke new woe and improvided scath,
By breaking of the band betwixt us twaine;
Wherein she used hath the practicke paine
Of this false footman, clokt with simple-
nesse,

Whome if ye Archimago find, I ghesse,
Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse,
The falsest man alive; who tries, shall
find no lesse.'

XXXV

The king was greatly moved at her speach,
And, all with sudden indignation fraight,
Bad on that messenger rude hands to
reach.

Eftsoones the gard, which on his state did
wait,
Attacht that faytor false, and bound him
strait:

Who, seeming sorely chauffed at his band,
As chained beare, whom cruell dogs doe
bait,

With ydle force did faine them to with-
stand,
And often semblaunce made to scape out of
their hand.

XXXVI

But they him layd full low in dungeon
 deepe,
 And bound him hand and foote with yron
 chains,
 And with continual watch did warely keepe:
 Who then would thinke, that by his subtile
 trains
 He could escape fowle death or deadly
 pains?
 Thus when that princes wrath was pacifide,
 He gan renew the late forbidden baine,
 And to the knight his daughter deare he
 tyde,
 With sacred rites and vowes for ever to
 abyde.

XXXVII

His owne two hands the holy knotts did
 knitt,
 That none but death for ever can divide;
 His owne two hands, for such a turne most
 fitt,
 The housling fire did kindle and provide,
 And holy water thereon sprinkled wide;
 At which the bushy teade a groome did
 light,
 And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
 Where it should not be quenched day nor
 night,
 For feare of evill fates, but burnen ever
 bright.

XXXVIII

Then gan they sprinkle all the posts with
 wine,
 And made great feast to solemnize that
 day:
 They all perfumde with frankincense divine,
 And precious odours fetcht from far away,
 That all the house did sweat with great
 aray:
 And all the while sweete musicke did
 apply
 Her curious skill, the warbling notes to
 play,
 To drive away the dull melancholy;
 The whiles one sung a song of love and
 jollity.

XXXIX

During the which there was an heavenly
 noise
 Heard sownd through all the pallace plea-
 santly,

Like as it had bene many an angels voice
 Singing before th' Eternall Majesty,
 In their trinall triplicities on hye;
 Yett wist no creature, whence that heavenly
 sweet
 Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly,
 Himselfe thereby refte of his senses
 meet,
 And ravished with rare impression in his
 sprite.

XL

Great joy was made that day of young and
 old,
 And solemne feast proclaymd throughout
 the land,
 That their exceeding merth may not be
 told:
 Suffice it heare by signes to understand
 The usuall joyes at knitting of loves band.
 Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did
 hold,
 Possessed of his ladies hart and hand,
 And ever, when his eie did her behold,
 His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures
 manifold.

XLI

Her joyous presence and sweet company
 In full content he there did long enjoy,
 Ne wicked envy, ne vile gealosy,
 His deare delights were hable to annoy:
 Yet, swimming in that sea of blisfull joy,
 He nought forgott, how he whilome had
 sworne,
 In case he could that monstrous beast de-
 stroy,
 Unto his Faery Queene backe to retourne:
 The which he shortly did, and Una left to
 mourne.

XLII

Now strike your sailes, yee jolly mari-
 ners,
 For we be come unto a quiet rode,
 Where we must land some of our passen-
 gers,
 And light this weary vessell of her lode.
 Here she a while may make her safe abode,
 Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
 And wants supplide; and then againe
 abroad
 On the long voiage whereto she is bent:
 Well may she speede, and fairely finish her
 intent.

EPITHALAMION

[Published 1595.]

Ye learned sisters, which have oftentimes
 Beene to me ayding, others to adorne,
 Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull
 rymes,
 That even the greatest did not greatly
 scorne
 To heare theyr names sung in your simple
 layes,
 But joyed in theyr praise;
 And when ye list your owne mishaps to
 mourne,
 Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck
 did rayse,
 Your string could soone to sadder tenor
 turne,
 And teach the woods and waters to lament
 Your dolefull dreriment: 11
 Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside,
 And having all your heads with girland
 crownd,
 Helpe me mine owne loves prayes to re-
 sound;
 Ne let the same of any be envide:
 So Orpheus did for his owne bride:
 So I unto my selfe alone will sing;
 The woods shall to me answer, and my
 eccho ring.

Early, before the worlds light giving lampe
 His golden beame upon the hills doth spred,
 Having disperst the nights unchearefull
 dampe, 21
 Doe ye awake, and, with fresh lustyhed,
 Go to the bowre of my beloved love,
 My truest turtle dove:
 Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,
 And long since ready forth his maske to
 move,
 With his bright tead that flames with many
 a flake,
 And many a bachelor to waite on him,
 In theyr fresh garments trim.
 Bid her awake therefore, and soone her
 dight, 30
 For lo! the wished day is come at last,
 That shall, for al the paynes and sorrowes
 past,
 Pay to her usury of long delight:
 And whylest she doth her dight,
 Doe ye to her of joy and solace sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your
 eccho ring.

Bring with you all the nymphes that you
 can heare,
 Both of the rivers and the forrests greene,
 And of the sea that neighbours to her neare,
 Al with gay girlands goodly wel besene. 40
 And let them also with them bring in hand
 Another gay girland,
 For my fayre love, of lillyes and of roses,
 Bound truelove wise with a blew silke
 riband.
 And let them make great store of bridale
 poses,
 And let them ecke bring store of other
 flowers,
 To deck the bridale bowers.
 And let the ground whereas her foot shall
 tread,
 For feare the stones her tender foot should
 wrong,
 Be strowed with fragrant flowers all along,
 And diaped lyke the discolored mead. 51
 Which done, doe at her chamber dore
 awayt,
 For she will waken strait;
 The whiles doe ye this song unto her sing,
 The woods shall to you auswer, and your
 eccho ring.

Ye nymphes of Mulla, which with carefull
 heed
 The silver scaly trouts doe tend full well,
 And greedy pikes which use therein to feed,
 (Those trouts and pikes all others doo ex-
 cell)
 And ye likewise which keepe the rushy
 lake, 60
 Where none doo fishes take,
 Bynd up the locks the which hang scatterd
 light,
 And in his waters, which your mirror make,
 Behold your faces as the christall bright,
 That when you come whereas my love doth
 lie,
 No blemish she may spie.
 And eke ye lightfoot mayds which keepe
 the dere
 That on the hoary mountayne use to towre,
 And the wyld wolves, which seeke them
 to devoure,
 With your steele darts doo chace from
 comming neer, 70
 Be also present heere,
 To helpe to decke her, and to help to sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your
 eccho ring.

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time:
The rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,
All ready to her silver coche to clyme,
And Phoebus gins to shew his glorious hed.
Hark how the cheerefull birds do chaunt
theyr laies,

And carroll of loves praise!

The merry larke hir mattins sings aloft, so
The thrush replies, the mavis descant playes,
The ouzell shrills, the ruddock warbles soft,
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this dayes merriment.

Ah! my deere love, why doe ye sleepe
thus long,

When meeter were that ye should now
awake,

T' awaite the comming of your joyous make,
And hearken to the birds love-learned song,
The dewy leaves among?

For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer, and theyr
eccho ring. 91

My love is now awake out of her dreame,
And her fayre eyes, like stars that dimmed
were

With darksome cloud, now shew theyr good-
ly beams

More bright then Hesperus his head doth
rere.

Come now, ye damzels, daughters of de-
light,

Helpe quickly her to dight.

But first come ye, fayre Hounres, which
were begot,

In Joves sweet paradise, of Day and Night,
Which doe the seasons of the year allot, 100

And al that ever in this world is fayre

Do make and still repayre.

And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian
Queene,

The which doe still adorne her beauties pride,
Helpe to adorne my beautifullest bride:

And as ye her array, still throw betweene
Some graces to be seene:

And as ye use to Venus, to her sing,

The whyles the woods shal answer, and your
eccho ring.

Now is my love all ready forth to come: 110

Let all the virgins therefore well awaite,

And ye fresh boyes, that tend upon her
groomer,

Prepare your selves, for he is comming
strayt.

Set all your things in seemely good aray,
Fit for so joyfull day,
The joyfult day that ever sunne did see.
Fairst Sun, shew forth thy favourable ray,
And let thy liffull heat not fervent be,
For feare of burning her sunshyny face,
Her beauty to disgrace. 120

O fayrest Phoebus, father of the Muse,

If ever I did honour thee aright,

Or sing the thing that mote thy mind de-
light,

Doe not thy servants simple boone refuse,

But let this day, let this one day be myne,

Let all the rest be thine.

Then I thy soverayne prayses loud wil sing,

That all the woods shal answer, and theyr
eccho ring.

Harke how the minstrels gin to shrill aloud
Their merry musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,
That well agree withouten breach or jar. 130

But most of all the damzels doe delite,

When they their tymbrels smyte,

And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,

That all the senses they doe ravish quite,

The whyles the boyes run up and downe the
street,

Crying aloud with strong confused noyes,

As if it were one voyce.

'Hymen, Ió Hymen, Hymen,' they do shout,

That even to the heavens they shouting
shrill 141

Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;

To which the people, standing all about,

As in approvaunce doe thereto applaud,

And loud advance her laud,

And evermore they 'Hymen, Hymen' sing,

That al the woods them answer, and theyr
eccho ring.

Loe! where she comes along with portly
pace,

Lyke Phoebe, from her chamber of the east,

Arysing forth to run her mighty race, 150

Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.

So well it her becommes, that ye would weene

Some angell she had beene.

Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden
wyre,

Sprinkled with perle, and perling flowres
atweene,

Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre,

And being crowned with a girland greene,

Seeme lyke some mayden queene.

Her modest eyes, abashed to behold
 So many gazers as on her do stare, 160
 Upon the lowly ground affixed are;
 Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
 But blush to heare her prayes sung so loud,
 So farre from being proud.
 Nathlesse doe ye still loud her prayes sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your
 eccho ring.

Tell me, ye merchants daughters, did ye see
 So fayre a creature in your towne before,
 So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
 Adorn'd with beautyes grace and vertues
 store? 170

Her goodly eyes lyke saphyres shining
 bright,

Her forehead yvory white,

Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath
 rudded,

Her lips lyke cherries charming men to
 brte,

Her brest like to a bowle of creame un-
 cruded,

Her paps lyke lyllyes budded,

Her snowie necke lyke to a marhle towre,
 And all her body like a pallace fayre,

Ascending uppe, with many a stately stayre,
 To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.

Why stand ye still, ye virgins, in amaze, 181
 Upon her so to gaze,

Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,
 To which the woods did answer, and your
 eccho ring?

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
 The inward beauty of her lively spright,
 Garnisht with heavenly giufts of high de-
 gree,

Much more then would ye wonder at that
 sight,

And stand astonisht lyke to those which
 red

Medusæes mafeul hed. 190

There dwels sweet Love, and constant Chas-
 tity.

Unspotted Fayth, and comely Womanhood,
 Regard of Honour, and mild Modesty;

There Vertue raynes as queene in royal
 throne,

And giveth lawes alone,

The which the base affections doe obay,
 And reeld theyr services unto her will;

Ne thought of thing uncoinely ever may
 Thereto approch to tempt her mind to ill.

Had ye once seene these her celestial threa-
 sures, 200

And unrevealed pleasures,

Then would ye wonder, and her prayes sing,
 That al the woods should auswer, and your
 eccho ring.

Open the temple gates unto my love,
 Open them wide that she may enter in,
 And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
 And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,
 For to receyve this saynt with honour dew,
 That commeth in to you. 209

With trembling steps and humble reverence,
 She commeth in before th' Almightyes vew:

Of her, ye virgins, learne obedience,

When so ye come into those holy places,

To humble your proud faces.

Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may

The sacred ceremonies there partake,

The which do endlesse matrimony make;

And let the roing organs loudly play

The praises of the Lord in lively notes,

The whiles with hollow throates 220

The choristers the joyous antheme sing,

That al the woods may answer, and their
 eccho ring.

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
 Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,
 And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
 How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
 And the pure snow with goodly vermill
 stayne,

Like crimson dyde in grave:

That even th' angels, which continually

About the sacred altare doe remaine, 230

Forget their service and about her fly,

Ofte peeping in her face, that seemes more
 fayre,

The more they on it stare.

Ruthersad eyes, still fastened on the ground,

Are governed with goodly modesty,

That suffers not one looke to glauce awry,

Which may let in a little thought unsownd.

Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,

The pledge of all our band?

Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing, 240

That all the woods may answer, and your
 eccho ring.

Now al is done; bring home the bride againe,

Bring home the triumph of our victory,

Bring home with you the glory of her gaine,

With joyance bring her and with jollity.

Never had man more joyfull day then this,
Whom heaven would heape with blis.
Make feast therefore now all this live long
day;

This day for ever to me holy is;
Poure out the wine without restraint or stay,
Poure not by cups, but by the belly full, ²⁵¹
Poure out to all that wull,
And sprinkle all the postes and wals with
wine,
That they may sweat, and drunken be with-
all.

Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,
And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of
vine;

And let the Graces daunce unto the rest,
For they can doo it best:
The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll
sing,
To which the woods shal answer, and theyr
eccho ring. ²⁶⁰

Ring ye the bells, ye yong men of the towne,
And leave your wonted labors for this day:
This day is holy; doe ye write it downe,
That ye for ever it remember may.
This day the sunne is in his chiefest hight,
With Barnaby the bright,
From whence declining daily by degrees,
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.
But for this time it ill ordained was, ²⁷⁰
To chose the longest day in all the yeare,
And shortest night, when longest fitter
weare:

Yet never day so long, but late would passe.
Ring ye the bells, to make it weare away,
And benefiers make all day,
And daunce about them, and about them sing:
That all the woods may answer, and your
eccho ring.

Ah! when will this long weary day have end,
And lende me leave to come unto my love?
How slowly do the houres theyr numbers
spend! ²⁸⁰

How slowly does sad Time his feathers move!
Hast thee, O fayrest planet, to thy home
Within the westerne fome:
Thy tyred steedes long since have need of
rest.

Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,
And the bright evening star with golden
creast

Appeare out of the east.

Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of
love,
That all the host of heaven in rankes doost
lead,
And guydest lovers through the nightes
dread, ²⁹⁰
How chearefully thou lookest from above,
And seemst to laugh atweene thy twinkling
light,
As joying in the sight
Of these glad many, which for joy doe sing,
That all the woods them answer, and their
echo ring!

Now cease, ye damsels, your delights fore-
past;

Enough is it that all the day was youres:
Now day is doene, and night is nighing fast:
Now bring the bryde into the brydall boures.
The night is come, now soone her disaray, ³⁰⁰
And in her bed her lay;
Lay her in lillies and in violets,
And silken courteins over her display,
And odour sheetes, and Arras coverlets.
Behold how goodly my faire love does ly,
In proud humility!
Like unto Maia, when as Jove her tooke,
In Tempe, lying on the flowry gras,
Twixt sleepe and wake, after she weary was
With bathing in the Acidalian brooke. ³¹⁰
Now it is night, ye damsels may be gon,
And leave my love alone,
And leave likewise your former lay to sing:
The woods no more shal answer, nor your
echo ring.

Now welcome, night! thou night so long
expected,
That long daies labour doest at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruell Love col-
lected,

Hast sumd in one, and cancelled for aye:
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,
That no man may us see, ³²⁰
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.
Let no false treason seeke us to entrap,
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy
The safety of our joy:

But let the night be calme and quiet some,
Without tempestuous storms or sad afay:
Lyke as when Jove with fayre Alcmena lay,
When he begot the great Tiryntian groome:
Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie,
And begot Majesty. ³³⁰

And let the mayds and yongmen cease to sing:

Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr echo ring.

Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull teares,
Be heard all night within, nor yet without:
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden feares,

Breake gentle sleepe with misconceived dout.

Let no deluding dreames, nor dreadful sights,

Make sudden sad affrights;

Ne let house-fyres, nor lightnings helpelesse harmes, 340

Ne let the Pouke, nor other evill sprights,
Ne let mischivous witches with theyr charmes,

Ne let hob goblins, names whose sense we see not,

Fray us with things that be not.

Let not the shrieck oule, nor the storke be heard,

Nor the night raven that still deadly yels,
Nor damned ghosts cald up with mighty spels,

Nor grievely vultures make us once affeard:
Ne let th' unpleasant quyre of frogs still croking

Make us to wish theyr choking. 350

Let none of these theyr dreary accents sing;
Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr echo ring.

But let stil Silence trew night watches keepe,

That sacred Peace may in assurance rayne,
And tymely Sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,
May poure his limbe forth on your pleasant playne,

The whiles an hundred little winged loves,
Like divers feathered doves,

Shall fly and flutter round about our bed,
And in the secret darke, that none reproves,
Their prey stealthes shall worke, and snares shal spread 361

To flich away sweet snatches of delight,
Conceald through covert night.

Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will:

For greedy Pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,

Thinks more upon her paradise of joyes,
Then what ye do, albe it good or ill.

All night therefore attend your merry play,
For it will soone be day:

Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing,

Ne will the woods now answer, nor your echo ring. 371

Who is the same which at my window peepes?

Or whose is that faire face that shines so bright?

Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepees,
But walkes about high heaven al the night?
O fayrest goddesse, do thou not envy

My love with me to spy:

For thou likewise didst love, though now unthought,

And for a fleece of woll, which privily
The Latnian shephard once unto thee brought, 380

His pleasures with thee wrought.

Therefore to us be favorable now;

And sith of wemens labours thou hast charge,

And generation goodly dost enlarge,
Encline thy will t' effect our wishfull vow,
And the chaste wombe informe with timely seed,

That may our comfort breed:

Till which we cease our hopefull hap to sing,

Ne let the woods us answer, nor our echo ring.

And thou, great Juno, which with awful might 390

The lawes of wedlock still dost patronize,
And the religion of the faith first plight

With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize,
And eeke for comfort often called art

Of women in their smart,
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,

And all thy blessings unto us impart.

And thou, glad Genius, in whose gentle hand

The brideale bowre and geniall bed remaine,

Without blemish or staine, 400

And the sweet pleasures of theyr loves delight

With secret ayde doest succour and supply,
Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny,
Send us the timely fruit of this same night.
And thou, fayre Hebe, and thou, Hymen free,

Grant that it may so be.
 Til which we cease your further prayse to
 sing,
 Ne any woods shal answer, nor your eccho
 ring.

And ye high heavens, the temple of the
 gods,
 In which a thousand torches flaming bright ⁴⁰⁹
 Doe burne, that to us wretched earthly
 clods
 In dreadful darknesse lend desired light,
 And all ye powers which in the same re-
 mayne,
 More then we men can fayne,
 Poure out your blessing on us plentiously,
 And happy influence upon us raine,
 That we may raise a large posterity,
 Which from the earth, which they may
 long possesse
 With lasting happinesse, ⁴¹⁹
 Up to your haughty pallaces may mount,
 And for the guerdon of theyr glorious
 merit,
 May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,
 Of blessed saints for to increase the count.
 So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,
 And cease till then our tymely joyes to
 sing:
 The woods no more us answer, nor our
 eccho ring.

Song, made in lieu of many ornaments
 With which my love should duly have bene
 deckt,
 Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
 Ye would not stay your dew time to ex-
 pect, ⁴³⁰
 But promist both to recompens,
 Be unto her a goodly ornament,
 And for short time an endlesse monument.

PROTHALAMION

OR

A SPOUSALL VERSE MADE BY
 EDM. SPENSER

IN HONOUR OF THE DOUBLE MARIAGE
 OF THE TWO HONORABLE & VERTUOUS
 LADIES, THE LADIE ELIZABETH AND
 THE LADIE KATHERINE SOMERSET,
 DAUGHTERS TO THE RIGHT HONOUR-
 ABLE THE EARLE OF WORCESTER AND

ESPOUSED TO THE TWO WORTHIE
 GENTLEMEN MASTER HENRY GILFORD,
 AND MASTER WILLIAM PETER, ESQUY-
 ERS

[Publ. 1596.]

CALME was the day, and through the trem-
 bling ayre
 Sweete breathing Zephyrus did softly play,
 A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
 Hot Titans beames, which then did glyster
 fayre:
 When I, whom sullein care,
 Through discontent of my long fruitlesse
 stay
 In princes court, and expectation vayne
 Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,
 Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my
 brayne,
 Walkt forth to ease my payne ¹⁰
 Along the shoare of silver streaming
 Themmes;
 Whose ruddy bancke, the which his river
 hemmes,
 Was paynted all with variable flowers,
 And all the meades adorn'd with daintie
 gemmes,
 Fit to decke maydens bowres,
 And crowne their paramours,
 Against the brydale day, which is not
 long:
 Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
 my song.

There, in a meadow, by the rivers side,
 A focke of nymphes I chanced to espy, ²⁰
 All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
 With goodly greenish locks all loose untide,
 As each had bene a bryde:
 And each one had a little wicker basket,
 Made of fine twigs entrayled curiously,
 In which they gathered flowers to fill their
 flasket;
 And with fine fingers cropt full feateously
 The tender stalkes on hye.
 Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,
 They gathered some; the violet pallid blew,
 The little dazie, that at evening closes, ³¹
 The virgin lillie, and the primrose trew,
 With store of vermeil roses,
 To decke their bridegromes posies
 Against the brydale day, which was not
 long:
 Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
 my song.

With that I saw two swannes of goodly
hewe

Come softly swimming downe along the lee;
Two fairer birds I yet did never see:

The snow which doth the top of Pindus
strew 40

Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda, whiter did appear:

Yet Leda was, they say, as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare:
So purely white they were,

That even the gentle streame, the which
them bare,

Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes
spare

To wet their silken feathers, least they
might

Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so
fayre, 50

And marre their beauties bright,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their brydale day, which was not
long:

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

Eftsoones the nymphes, which now had
flowers their fill,

Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the christal
flood;

Whom when they sawe, they stood amazed
still,

Their wondring eyes to fill.
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so
fayre, 60

Of fowles so lovely, that they sure did
deeme

Them heavenly borne, or to be that same
payre

Which through the skie draw Venus silver
teeme;

For sure they did not seeme
To be begot of any earthly seede,
But rather angels or of angels breede:
Yet were they bred of Somers-heat, they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and
weede

The earth did fresh aray;
So fresh they seem'd as day, 70
Even as their brydale day, which was not
long:

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets
drew

Great store of flowers, the honour of the
field,

That to the sense did fragrant odours yeild,
All which upon those goodly birds they
threw,

And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempes
shore,

Scattered with flowres, through Thessaly
they streeme, 80

That they appeare, through lillies plenteous
store,

Like a brydes chamber flore.

Two of those nymphes, meane while, two
garlands bound

Of freshest flowres which in that mead
they found,

The which presenting all in trim array,
Their snowie foreheads therewithall they
crownd,

Whil'st one did sing this lay,
Prepar'd against that day,
Against their brydale day, which was not
long:

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song. 90

'Ye gentle birdes, the worlds faire orna-
ment,

And heavens glorie, whom this happie
hower

Doth leade unto your lovers blissfull bower,
Joy may you have and gentle hearts con-
tent

Of your loves couplement:
And let faire Venus, that is Queene of
Love,

With her heart-quelling sonne upon you
smile,

Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to
remove

All loves dislike, and friendships faultie
guile

For ever to assoile. 100
Let endlesse peace your steadfast hearts
accord,

And blessed plentie wait upon your bord;
And let your bed with pleasures chaste
abound,

That fruitfull issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joyes redound,

Upon your brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, run softlie, till I end
my song.'

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong, ¹¹⁰
Which said, their bridale daye should not
be long.

And gentle Echo from the neighbour
ground

Their accents did resound.

So forth those joyous birdes did passe along,
Adowne the lee, that to them murmurde
low,

As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,
Yeat did by signes his glad affection show,
Making his streame run slow.

And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell
The rest so far as Cynthia doth shend ¹²¹

The lesser starres. So they, enrauged well,
Did on those two attend,

And their best service lend,
Against their wedding day, which was not
long:

Sweete Themmes, run softly, till I end
my song.

At length they all to mery London came,
To mery London, my most kyndly nurse,
That to me gave this lifes first native sourse;
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of auncient fame. ¹³¹

There when they came, whereas those
bricky towres,

The which on Themmes brode aged backe
doe ryde,

Where now the studious lawyers have their
bowers,

There whylome wont the Templer Knights
to hyde,

Till they decayd through pride:

Next whereunto there standes a stately
place,

Where oft I gayned giftes and goodly grace
Of that great lord which therein wont to
dwell,

Whose want too well now feeles my
freendles case: ¹⁴⁰

But ah! here fits not well

Olde woes, but joyes to tell,

Against the bridale daye, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
Great Englands glory and the worlds wide
wonder,

Whose dreadfull name late through all
Spaine did thunder,

And Hercules two pillors standing neere
Did make to quake and feare.

Faire branch of bouor, flower of cheval-
rie, ¹⁵⁰

That fillest England with thy triumphes
fame,

Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne
name

That promiseth the same:

That through thy prowesse and victorious
armes

Thy country may be freed from forraine
harmes;

And great Elisaes glorious name may
ring

Through all the world, fil'd with thy wide
alarmes,

Which some brave Muse may sing

To ages following, ¹⁶⁰

Upon the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

From those high towers this noble lord
issuing,

Like radiant Hesper when his golden hayre
In th' ocean billowes he hath bathed fayre,

Descended to the rivers open vewing,
With a great traine ensuing.

Above the rest were goodly to bee seene
Two gentle knights of lovely face and
feature,

Beseeming well the bower of anie queene, ¹⁷⁰

With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature:

That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in
sight,

Which decke the bauldricke of the heavens
bright.

They two, forth pacing to the rivers side,
Received those two faire brides, their
loves delight,

Which, at th' appointed tyde,

Each one did make his bryde,

Against their brydale day, which is not
long:

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song. ¹⁸⁰

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SONG

[From *The Merchant of Venice*]

TELL me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engend'ed in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell;

I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

SONG

[From *As You Like It*]

UNDER the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

SONG

[From *As You Like It*]

BLOW, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green
holly.
Most friendship is feigning, most loving
mere folly.
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend rememb'ed not.
Heigh-ho! sing, etc.

SONG

[From *Twelfth Night*]

O MISTRESS mine, where are you roam-
ing?

O, stay and hear, your true love's com-
ing,

That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting.
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter.

Present mirth hath present laughter;

What's to come is still unsure.

In delay there lies no plenty;

Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,

Youth's a stuff will not endure.

SONG

[From *Cymbeline*]

HARK, hark! the lark at heaven's gate
sings,

And Phœbus gins arise

His steeds to water at those springs

On chalic'd flowers that lies;

And winking Mary-buds begin

To ope their golden eyes;

With every thing that pretty is,

My lady sweet, arise,

Arise, arise.

ARIEL'S SONG

[From *The Tempest*]

COME unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands.

Curtied when you have, and kiss'd

The wild waves whist,

Foot it feately here and there,

And, sweet sprites, the burden bear

Burden (dispersedly). Hark, hark!

Bow-wow.

The watch-dogs bark!

Bow-wow.

Ari. Hark, hark! I hear

The strain of strutting chanticleer

Cry, "Cock-a-diddle-dow."

ARIEL'S SONG

[From *The Tempest*]

FULL fathom five thy father lies;
 Of his bones are coral made;
 Those are pearls that were his eyes:
 Nothing of him that doth fade
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich and strange.
 Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:

Burden. Ding-dong.

Ari. Hark! now I hear them,—ding-dong,
 bell.

ARIEL'S SONG

[From *The Tempest*]

Ari. "WHERE the bee sucks, there suck I.
 In a cowslip's bell I lie;
 There I couch when owls do cry.
 On the bat's back I do fly
 After summer merrily.
 Merrily, merrily shall I live now
 Under the blossom that hangs on the
 bough."

SONNETS

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
 THESE . INSUING . SONNETS .
 MR. W. H. ALL . HAPPINESSE .
 AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
 PROMISED .

BY .

OUR . EVER-LIVING . POET .
 WISHETH .

THE . WELL-WISHING .
 ADVENTURER . IN .
 SETTING .
 FORTH .

T. T.

18

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of
 May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a
 date;

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature's changing course un-
 trimm'd:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
 Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his
 shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can
 see,

So long lives this and this gives life to
 thee.

29

WHEN, in disgrace with Fortune and men's
 eyes,

I all alone beweep my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless
 cries,

And look upon myself and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in
 hope,

Featur'd like him, like him with friends
 possess'd,

Desiring this man's art, and that man's
 scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost de-
 spising,

Haply I think on thee; and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's
 gate;

For thy sweet love rememb'red such
 wealth brings

That then I scorn to change my state
 with kings.

30

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent
 thought

I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's
 waste:

Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless
 night,

And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd
 woe,

And moan the expense of many a vanish'd
 sight:

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
 The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.

55

Nor marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;

But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire
shall burn

The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still
find room

Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending
doom.

So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers'
eyes.

60

LIKE as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;

Each changing place with that which goes
before,

In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being
crown'd,

Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift con-
found.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to
mow;

And yet to times in hope my verse shall
stand,

Praising thy worth, despite his cruel
hand.

64

WHEN I have seen by Time's fell hand de-
faced

The rich proud coat of outworn buried
age;

When sometime lofty towers I see down-
razed

And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss and loss with
store;

When I have seen such interchange of
state,

Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my love
away.

This thought is as a death, which cannot
choose

But weep to have that which it fears to
lose.

65

SINCE brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor bound-
less sea,

But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a
plea,

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold
out

Against the wreckful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time de-
cays?

O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest
lie hid?

Or what strong hand can hold his swift
foot back?

Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine
bright.

66

TIR'D with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:

Tir'd with all these, from these would I
be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to
dwell.

Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be
forgot

If thinking on me then should make you
woe.

O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,

Lest the wise world should look into
your moan

And mock you with me after I am gone.

73

THAT time of year thou mayst in me be-
hold

When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do
hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the
cold,

Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet
birds sang.

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take
away,

Death's second self, that seals up all in
rest.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd
by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy
love more strong,

To love that well which thou must leave
ere long.

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I
ey'd,

Such seems your beauty still. Three win-
ters-cold

Have from the forests shook three sum-
mers' pride,

Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn
turn'd

In process of the seasons have I seen.

Three April perfumes in three hot Junes
burn'd,

Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are
green.

Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure and no pace perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still
doth stand,

Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age un-
bred;

Ere you were born was beauty's summer
dead.

106

WHEN in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.

So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:

For we, which now behold these present
days,

Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues
to praise.

116

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his
height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips
and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and
weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

ROBERT HERRICK

HESPERIDES

[Publ. 1648]

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK

I SING of brooks, of blossoms, birds and
bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July-flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails,
wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal
cakes;
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris;
I sing of times trans-shifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white; 10
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the Fairy King;
I write of hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of heaven, and hope to have it after all.

DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A SWEET disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring lace which here and there
Enthralls the crimson stomacher:
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly:
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat: 20
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility:
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

TO DIANE ME

DEAR, though to part it be a hell,
Yet, Diane me, now farewell:

Thy frown last night did bid me go,
But whither only grief does know.
I do beseech thee ere we part,
If merciful as fair thou art,
Or else desir'st that maids should tell
Thy pity by love's chronicle,
O Diane me, rather kill
Me, than to make me languish still! 10
'Tis cruelty in thee to th' height
Thus, thus to wound, not kill outright;
Yet there's a way found, if you please,
By sudden death to give me ease;
And thus devis'd, do thou but this —
Bequeath to me one parting kiss,
So sup'rabundant joy shall be
The executioner of me.

THE WOUNDED CUPID

CUPID, as he lay among
Roses, by a bee was stung;
Whereupon, in anger flying
To his mother, said thus, crying:
Help! oh help! your boy's a-dying.
And why, my pretty lad, said she?
Then, blubbering, replied he:
A winged snake has bitten me,
Which country people call a bee.
At which she smiled; then, with her hairs
And kisses drying up his tears: 11
Alas! said she, my wag, if this
Such a pernicious torment is,
Come tell me then, how great's the smart
Of those thou woundest with thy dart!

TO DIANE ME

SWEET, be not proud of those two eyes
Which, starlike, sparkle in their skies;
Nor be you proud that you can see
All hearts your captives, yours yet free!
Be you not proud of that rich hair
Which wantons with the love-sick air;
Wheneas that ruby which you wear,
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,

Will last to be a precious stone
When all your world of beauty's gone. 10

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

GET up, get up for shame, the blooming
morn

Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colours through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.

Each flower has wept and bow'd toward the
east

Above an hour since: yet you not dress'd;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?

When all the birds have matins said 10
And sung their thankful hymns, 't is sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,

Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-tiue, fresh
and green,

And sweet as Flora. Take no care

For jewels for your gown or hair:

Fear not; the leaves will strew

Gems in abundance upon you: 30

Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls un-
wept;

Come and receive them while the light

Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:

And Titan on the eastern hill

Retires himself, or else stands still

Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief
in praying:

Few beads are best when once we go
a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming,
mark

How each field turns a street, each street a
park 30

Made green and trimm'd with trees:
see how

Devotion gives each house a bough

Or branch: each porch, each door ere
this

An ark, a tabernacle is,

Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove;

As if here were those cooler shades of love.

Can such delights be in the street

And open fields and we not see't?

Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey

The proclamation made for May: 40

And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.

A deal of youth, ere this, is come

Back, and with white-thorn laden home.

Some have despatch'd their cakes and
cream

Before that we have left to dream:

And some have wept, and woo'd, and
plighted troth,

And chose their priest, ere we can cast off
sloth:

Many a green-gown has been given; 51

Many a kiss, both odd and even:

Many a glance too has been sent

From out the eye, love's firmament;

Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks pick'd, yet we're not
a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time.

We shall grow old apace, and die

Before we know our liberty. 60

Our life is short, and our days run

As fast away as does the sun;

And, as a vapour or a drop of rain,

Once lost, can ne'er be found again,

So when or you or I are made

A fable, song, or fleeting shade,

All love, all liking, all delight

Lies drowned with us in endless night.

Then while time serves, and we are but de-
caying, 65

Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

THE CAPTIV'D BEE, OR THE LITTLE FILCHER

As Julia once a-slumbering lay

It chanced a bee did fly that way,

After a dew or dew-like shower,

To tittle freely in a flower.

For some rich flower he took the lip

Of Julia, and began to sip;

But when he felt he sucked from thence

Honey, and in the quintessence,

He drank so much he scarce could stir,

So Julia took the pilferer. 70

And thus surprised, as fletchers use,
 He thus began himself t' excuse:
 Sweet lady-flower, I never brought
 Hither the least one thieving thought;
 But, taking those rare lips of yours
 For some fresh, fragrant, luscious flowers,
 I thought I might there take a taste,
 Where so much syrup ran at waste.
 Besides, know this: I never sting
 The flower that gives me nourishing; 20
 But with a kiss, or thanks, do pay
 For honey that I bear away.
 This said, he laid his little scrip
 Of honey 'fore her ladyship:
 And told her, as some tears did fall,
 That that he took, and that was all.
 At which she smiled, and bade him go
 And take his bag; but thus much know:
 When next he came a-pilfering so,
 He should from her full lips derive 30
 Honey enough to fill his hive.

TO CHERRY-BLOSSOMS

YE may simper, blush and smile,
 And perfume the air awhile;
 But, sweet things, ye must be gone,
 Fruit, ye know, is coming on;
 Then, ah! then, where is your grace,
 Whenas cherries come in place?

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE
 MUCH OF TIME

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old time is still a-flying:
 And this same flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first, 9
 When youth and blood are warmer;
 But being spent, the worse, and worst
 Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
 And while ye may go marry:
 For having lost but once your prime
 You may for ever tarry.

TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COM-
 MAND HIM ANYTHING

BID me to live, and I will live
 Thy Protestant to be,
 Or bid me love, and I will give
 A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
 A heart as sound and free
 As in the whole world thou canst find,
 That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
 To honour thy decree: 20
 Or bid it languish quite away,
 And't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
 While I have eyes to see:
 And, having none, yet I will keep
 A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
 Under that cypress-tree:
 Or bid me die, and I will dare
 E'en death to die for thee. 25

Thou art my life, my love, my heart;
 The very eyes of me:
 And hast command of every part
 To live and die for thee.

TO MEADOWS

YE have been fresh and green,
 Ye have been fill'd with flowers,
 And ye the walks have been
 Where maids have spent their hours.

You have beheld how they
 With wicker arks did come
 To kiss and bear away
 The richer cowslips home.

Y've heard them sweetly sing,
 And seen them in a round: 25
 Each virgin like a spring,
 With honeysuckles crown'd.

But now we see none here
 Whose silvery feet did tread,
 And with dishevell'd hair
 Adorn'd this smoother mead.

Like unthrifths, having spent
Your stock and needy grown,
Y^e are left here to lament
Your poor estates, alone.

OBERON'S FEAST

*Shapcot ! to thee the fairy state
I, with discretion, dedicate.
Because thou prizest things that are
Curious and unfamiliar.
Take first the feast; these dishes gone,
We'll see the Fairy Court anon.*

A LITTLE mushroom table spread,
After short prayers, they set on bread;
A moon-parch'd grain of purest wheat,
With some small glittering grit to eat
His choice bits with; then in a trice
They make a feast less great than nice.
But all this while his eye is serv'd,
We must not think his ear was sterv'd;
But that there was in place to stir
His spleen, the chirring grasshopper,
The merry cricket, puling fly,
The piping gnat for minstrelsy.
And now we must imagine, first,
The elves present, to quench his thirst,
A pure seed-pearl of infant dew
Brought and besweetened in a blue
And pregnant violet; which done,
His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table, where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies:
Of which he eats, and tastes a little
Of that we call the cuckoo's spittle.
A little fuzz-ball pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands;
That was too coarse: but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugar'd rush, and eats the sagg
And well-bestrutted bee's sweet bag:
Gladding his palate with some store
Of emmets' eggs; what would he more?
But beards of nice, a newt's stewed thigh,
A bloated earwig and a fly;
With the red-capp'd worm that's shut
Within the concave of a nut,
Brown as his tooth. A little moth
Late fatten'd in a piece of cloth:
With withered cherries, mandrakes' ears,
Moles' eyes; to these the slain stag's tears
The unctuous dewlaps of a snail,
The broke-heart of a nightingale

O'ercome in music; with a wine
Ne'er ravish'd from the flattering vine,
But gently press'd from the soft side
Of the most sweet and dainty bride,
Brought in a dainty daisy, which
He fully quaffs up to bewitch
His blood to height; this done, commended
Grace by his priest; *the feast is ended.*

TO DAFFODILS

FAIR daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

THE BRACELET TO JULIA

WHY I tie about thy wrist,
Julia, this my silken twist;
For what other reason is't,
But to show thee how, in part,
Thou my pretty captive art?
But thy bonds slave is my heart;
'Tis but silk that bindeth thee,
Knap the thread and thou art free:
But 'tis otherwise with me;
I am bound, and fast bound, so
That from thee I cannot go;
If I could, I would not so.

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON

SHUT not so soon; the dull-ey'd night
Has not as yet begun

To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear ;
Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye, 10
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

TO BLOSSOMS

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast ?
Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here a while,
To blush and gently smile ;
And go at last.

What ! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night ?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth 10
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave :
And after they have shown their pride
Like you a while, they glide
Into the grave.

TO A BED OF TULIPS

BRIGHT tulips, we do know
You had your coming hither,
And fading-time does show
That ye must quickly wither.

Your sisterhoods may stay,
And smile here for your hour ;
But die ye must away,
Even as the meanest flower.

Come, virgins, then, and see
Your frailties, and bemoan ye ; 10
For, lost like these, 'twill be
As time had never known ye.

TO PHYLLIS, TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM

LIVE, live with me, and thou shalt see
The pleasures I'll prepare for thee ;
What sweets the country can afford
Shall bless thy bed and bless thy board.
The soft, sweet moss shall be thy bed
With crawling woodbine over-spread ;
By which the silver-shedding streams
Shall gently melt thee into dreams.
Thy clothing, next, shall be a gown
Made of the fleece's purest down. 10
The tongues of kids shall be thy meat,
Their milk thy drink ; and thou shalt eat

The paste of filberts for thy bread,
With cream of cowslips buttered ;
Thy feasting-tables shall be hills
With daisies spread and daffodils,
Where thou shalt sit, and red-breast by,
For meat, shall give thee melody.
I'll give thee chains and carcanets
Of primroses and violets. 20
A bag and bottle thou shalt have,
That richly wrought, and this as brave ;
So that as either shall express
The wearer's no mean shepherdess.
At shearing-times, and yearly wakes,
When Themilis his pastime makes,
There thou shalt be ; and be the wit,
Nay, more, the feast, and grace of it.
On holidays, when virgins meet
To dance the heyes with nimble feet, 30
Thou shalt come forth, and then appear

The queen of roses for that year ;
And having danced, 'bove all the best,
Carry the garland from the rest.
In wicker baskets maids shall bring
To thee, my dearest shepherdling,
The blushing apple, bashful pear,
And shame-fac'd plum, all simpr'ing there.
Walk in the groves, and thou shalt find
The name of Phyllis in the rind 40
Of every straight and smooth-skin tree ;
Where kissing that, I'll twice kiss thee.
To thee a sheep-hook I will send,
Be-prank'd with ribands to this end ;
This, this alluring hook might be
Less for to catch a sheep than me.
Thou shalt have possets, wassails fine,
Not made of ale, but spiced wine,
To make thy maids and self free mirth,
All sitting near the glitt'ring hearth. 50

Thou shalt have ribands, roses, rings,
Gloves, garters, stockings, shoes, and strings
Of winning colours, that shall move
Others to lust, but me to love.
These, nay, and more, thine own shall be
If thou wilt love, and live with me.

ART ABOVE NATURE : TO JULIA

WHEN I behold a forest spread
With silken trees upon thy head,
And when I see that other dress
Of flowers set in comeliness;
When I behold another grace
In the ascent of curious lace,
Which like a pinnacle doth show
The top, and the top-gallant too.
Then, when I see thy tresses bound
Into an oval, square, or round, 10
And knit in knots far more than I
Can tell by tongue, or true-love tie;
Next, when those lawny films I see
Play with a wild civility,
And all those airy silks to flow,
Alluring me, and tempting so:
I must confess mine eye and heart
Dotes less on Nature than on Art.

THE NIGHT-PIECE : TO JULIA

HER eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-th'-Wisp mislight thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
But on, on thy way
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber : 11
What though the moon does slumber ?
The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light
Like tapers clear without number.

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me;
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet
My soul I'll pour into thee. 20

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free;
O how that glittering taketh me !

TO HIS BOOK

Go thou forth, my book, though late:
Yet be timely fortunate.
It may chance good luck may send
Thee a kinsman, or a friend,
That may harbour thee, when I
With my fates neglected lie.
If thou know'st not where to dwell,
See, the fire's by: farewell.

NOBLE NUMBERS

[Publ. with *Hesperides*, 1648]

HIS LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me !

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomfited,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me !

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep, 20
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me !

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me !

When his potion and his pill
Has, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing, but to kill ;
Sweet Spirit, comfort me ! 20

When the passing bell doth toll,
And the furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath prayed,
And I nod to what is said, 30
'Cause my speech is now decayed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm toss'd about,
Either with despair, or doubt;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 40

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears, and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to Thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where Thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep 10
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
Good words or meat;

Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein 20
A little bin
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unclipt, unhead.
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is Thine,
And all those other bits, that be 30
There placed by Thee;
The worts, the purlain, and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth;
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink. 40
Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand,
That soils my land;
And giv'st me for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one.
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year,
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream for wine. 50
All these, and better Thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
As wholly Thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

THE DIRGE OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

SUNG BY THE VIRGINS

O THOU, the wonder of all days!
O paragon, and pearl of praise!
O virgin-martyr, ever blest
Above the rest
Of all the maiden train! We come,
And bring fresh strewings to thy tomb.

Thus, thus, and thus we compass round
Thy harmless and unhaunted ground;
And as we sing thy dirge, we will

The daffodil

10

And other flowers lay upon
The altar of our love, thy stone.

Thou wonder of all maids, liest here,
Of daughters all the dearest dear;
The eye of virgins; nay, the queen
Of this smooth green,
And all sweet meads; from whence we get
The primrose and the violet.

Too soon, too dear did Jephthah buy,
By thy sad loss, our liberty:

20

His was the bond and cov'nant, yet
Thou paid'st the debt:
Lamented maid! he won the day,
But for the conquest thou didst pay.

Thy father brought with him along
The olive branch and victor's song:
He slew the Ammonites, we know,

But to thy woe;

And in the purchase of our peace,
The cure was worse than the disease.

30

For which obedient zeal of thine,
We offer here, before thy shrine,
Our sighs for storax, tears for wine;
And to make fine
And fresh thy hearse-cloth, we will, here,
Four times bestrew thee ev'ry year.

Receive, for this thy praise, our tears:
Receive this offering of our hairs:
Receive these crystal vials fill'd

With tears distill'd

40

From teeming eyes; to these we bring,
Each maid, her silver filleting,

To gild thy tomb; besides, these caul¹,
These laces, ribbons, and these falls,²
These veils, wherewith we use to hide

The bashful bride,

When we conduct her to her groom:
And all we lay upon thy tomb.

No more, no more, since thou art dead,
Shall we e'er bring coy brides to bed;
No more, at yearly festivals

50

We cowslip balls

Or chains of columbines shall make
For this or that occasion's sake.

¹ *Cauls*, nets for the hair.

² *Falls*, trimmings hanging loosely.

No, no; our maiden pleasures be
Wrapp'd in the winding-sheet with thee:
'Tis we are dead, though not i' th' grave:

Or, if we have

One seed of life left, 'tis to keep
A Lent for thee, to fast and weep.

60

Sleep in thy peace, thy bed of spice,
And make this place all paradise:
Maysweets grow here: and smoke from hence

Fat frankincense:

Let balm and cassia send their scent
From out thy maiden-monument.

May no wolf howl, or screech-owl stir
A wing about thy sepulchre!
No boisterous winds, or storms, come hither
To starve or wither

70

Thy soft sweet earth! but, like a spring,
Love keep it ever flourishing.

May all shy maids, at wonted hours,
Come forth to strew thy tomb with flow'rs,
May virgins, when they come to mourn,

Male-incense burn

Upon thine altar! then return,
And leave thee sleeping in thy urn.

TO KEEP A TRUE LENT

Is this a fast, to keep

The larger lean?

And clean

From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish

Of flesh, yet still

To fill

The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,

Or ragg'd to go,

Or show

A downcast look and sour?

No; 'tis a fast to dole

Thy sheaf of wheat,

And meat,

Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,

From old debate

And hate;

To circumsise thy life.

80

To show a heart grief-rent;

To starve thy sin,

Not bin;

And that's to keep thy Lent.

JOHN MILTON

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

(1629)

I

THIS is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal
King,

Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did
bring;

For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual
peace.

II

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wout at Heaven's high coun-
cil-table 10

To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of
mortal clay.

III

Say, heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred
vein

Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn
strain,

To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the Sun's
team untrod,

Hath took no print of the approaching
light, 20

And all the spangled host keep watch in
squadrons bright?

IV

See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours
sweet!

Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to
greet,
And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hal-
lowed fire.

THE HYMN

I

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born child 30
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger
lies;

Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty para-
mour.

II

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent
snow,

And on her naked shame, 40
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul defor-
mities.

III

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace.
She, crowned with olive green, came
softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds
dividing; 50

And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea
and land.

IV

No war, or battle's sound,
 Was heard the world around;
 The idle spear and shield were high up-
 hung;
 The hooked chariot stood,
 Unstained with hostile blood;
 The trumpet spake not to the armed
 throng;
 And kings sat still with awful eye,
 As if they surely knew their sovran Lord
 was by. 60

V

But peaceful was the night
 Wherein the Prince of Light
 His reign of peace upon the earth began.
 The winds, with wonder whist,
 Smoothly the waters kissed,
 Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
 While birds of calm sit brooding on the
 charmed wave.

VI

The stars, with deep amaze,
 Stand fixed in steadfast gaze, 70
 Bending one way their precious influ-
 ence,
 And will not take their flight,
 For all the morning light,
 Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;
 But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
 Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid
 them go.

VII

And, though the shady gloom
 Had given day her room,
 The Sun himself withheld his wonted
 speed,
 And hid his head for shame, 80
 As his inferior flame
 The new-enlightened world no more
 should need:
 He saw a greater Sun appear
 Than his bright throue or burning axletree
 could bear.

VIII

The shepherds on the lawn,
 Or ere the point of dawn,
 Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
 Full little thought they than
 That the mighty Pan

Was kindly come to live with them be-
 low:
 Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep, 90
 Was all that did their silly thoughts so
 busy keep.

IX

When such music sweet
 Their hearts and ears did greet
 As never was by mortal finger strook,
 Divinely-warbled voice
 Answering the stringed noise,
 As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
 The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each
 heavenly close. 100

X

Nature, that heard such sound
 Beneath the hollow round
 Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrill-
 ing,
 Now was almost won
 To think her part was done,
 And that her reign had here its last ful-
 filling:
 She knew such harmony alone
 Could hold all Heaven and Earth in hap-
 pier union.

XI

At last surrounds their sight
 A globe of circular light, 110
 That with long beams the shamefaced
 Night arrayed;
 The helmèd cherubim
 And sworded seraphim
 Are seen in glittering ranks with wings
 displayed,
 Harping in loud and solemn quire,
 With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-
 born Heir.

XII

Such music (as 'tis said)
 Before was never made,
 But when of old the Sons of Morning
 sung
 While the Creator great, 120
 His constellations set,
 And the well-balanced World on hinges
 hung,
 And cast the dark foundations deep.
 And bid the weltering waves their oozy
 channel keep.

XIII

Ring out, ye crystal spheres !
 Once bless our human ears,
 If ye have power to touch our senses
 so;
 And let your silver chime
 Move in melodious time;
 And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ
 blow;
 And with your ninefold harmony
 Make up full consort to the angelic sym-
 phony.

XIV

For, if such holy song
 Enwrap our fancy long,
 Time will run back and fetch the Age of
 Gold;
 And speckled Vanity
 Will sicken soon and die,
 And leprous Sin will melt from earthly
 mould;
 And Hell itself will pass away,
 And leave her dolorous mansions to the
 peering day.

XV

Yea, Truth and Justice then
 Will down return to men,
 Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories
 wearing,
 Mercy will sit between,
 Throned in celestial sheen,
 With radiant feet the tissued clouds
 down steering;
 And Heaven, as at some festival,
 Will open wide the gates of her high palace-
 hall.

XVI

But wisest Fate says No,
 This must not yet be so;
 The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
 That on the bitter cross
 Must redeem our loss,
 So both himself and us to glorify:
 Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
 The wakeful trump of doom must thunder
 through the deep,

XVII

With such a horrid clang
 As on Mount Sinai rang,
 While the red fire and smouldering clouds
 outbrake:

The aged Earth, aghast
 With terror of that blast,
 Shall from the surface to the centre
 shake,
 When, at the world's last session,
 The dreadful Judge in middle air shall
 spread his throne.

XVIII

And then at last our bliss
 Full and perfect is,
 But now begins; for from this happy day
 The Old Dragon under ground,
 In straiter limits bound,
 Not half so far casts his usurped sway,
 And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
 Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX

The Oracles are dumb;
 No voice or hideous hum
 Runs through the archèd roof in words
 deceiving.
 Apollo from his shrine
 Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos
 leaving.
 No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
 Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the proph-
 etic cell.

XX

The lonely mountains o'er,
 And the resounding shore,
 A voice of weeping heard and loud la-
 ment;
 From haunted spring, and dale
 Edged with poplar pale,
 The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
 With flower-inwoven tresses torn
 The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled
 thickets mourn.

XXI

In consecrated earth,
 And on the holy hearth,
 The Lars and Lemures moan with mid-
 night plaint;
 In urns, and altars round,
 A drear and dying sound
 Affrights the flamens at their service
 quaint;
 And the chill marble seems to sweat,
 While each peculiar power foregoes his
 wonted seat.

XXII

Peor and Baalim
 Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-battered god of Pales-
 tine;
 And moonèd Ashtaroth, 200
 Heaven's queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:
 The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn;
 In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded
 Thammut mourn.

XXIII

And sullen Moloch, fled,
 Hath left in shadows dread
 His burning idol all of blackest hue;
 In vain with cymbals' ring
 They call the grisly king,
 In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
 The brutish gods of Nile as fast, 211
 Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

XXIV

Nor is Osiris seen
 In Memphian grove or green,
 Trampling the unshowered grass with
 lowings loud;
 Nor can he be at rest
 Within his sacred chest;
 Nought but profoundest Hell can be his
 shroud;
 In vain, with timbreless anthems dark,
 The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his wor-
 shipped ark. 220

XXV

He feels from Juda's land
 The dreaded Infant's hand;
 The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky
 eyn;
 Nor all the gods beside
 Longer dare abide,
 Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
 Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
 Can in his swaddling bands control the
 damned crew.

XXVI

So, when the sun in bed,
 Curtained with cloudy red, 230
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
 The flocking shadows pale
 Troop to the infernal jail,
 Each fettered ghost slips to his several
 grave,

And the yellow-skirted fays
 Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their
 moon-loved maze.

XXVII

But see! the Virgin blest
 Hath laid her Babe to rest.
 Time is our tedious song should here
 have ending:
 Heaven's youngest-teemèd star 240
 Hath fixed her polished car,
 Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp
 attending;
 And all about the courtly stable
 Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order ser-
 viceable.

L'ALLEGRO

(1633)

HENCE, loathèd Melancholy,
 Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
 In Stygian cave forlorn,
 'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and
 sights unholy,
 Find out some uncouth cell,
 Where brooding Darkness spreads his
 jealous wings,
 And the night-raven sings;
 There under ebon shades, and low-browed
 rocks,
 As ragged as thy locks,
 In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell. 10
 But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
 In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,
 And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
 Whom lovely Venus at a birth
 With two sister Graces more
 To ivy-crown'd Bacchus bore;
 Or whether (as some sager sing)
 The frolic Wind that breathes the spring,
 Zephyr with Aurora playing,
 As he met her once a-Maying, 20
 There on beds of violets blue,
 And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
 Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
 So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
 Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
 Jest and youthful Jollity,
 Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
 Nods, and Becks, and wreath'd Smiles,
 Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
 And love to live in dimple sleek; 30

Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
 And Laughter holding both his sides.
 Come, and trip it as ye go,
 On the light fantastic toe;
 And in thy right hand lead with thee
 The mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;
 And, if I give thee honour due,
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
 To live with her, and live with thee,
 In unreprieved pleasures free; 40
 To bear the lark begin his flight,
 And singing startle the dull night,
 From his watch-tower in the skies,
 Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
 Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
 And at my window bid good-morrow,
 Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
 Or the twisted eglantine;
 While the cock with lively din
 Scatters the rear of Darkness thin; 50
 And to the stack, or the barn-door,
 Stoutly struts his dames before:
 Oft listening how the hounds and horn
 Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,
 From the side of some hoar hill,
 Through the high wood echoing shrill:
 Sometime walking, not unseen,
 By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
 Right against the eastern gate,
 Where the great Sun begins his state, 60
 Robed in flames and amber light,
 The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
 While the ploughman, near at hand,
 Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
 And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
 And the mower whets his scythe,
 And every shepherd tells his tale
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,

Whilst the lantskip round it measures: 70
 Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
 Mountains on whose barren breast
 The labouring clouds do often rest;
 Meadows trim with daisies pied;
 Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
 Towers and battlements it sees
 Bosomed high in tufted trees,
 Where perhaps some Beauty lies,
 The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes. 80
 Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
 From betwixt two aged oaks,
 Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
 Are at their savoury dinner set

Of hearbs and other country messes,
 Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
 And then in haste her bower she leaves,
 With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
 Or, if the earlier season lead,
 To the tanned haycock in the mead. 90

Sometimes with secure delight
 The upland hamlets will invite,
 When the merry bells ring round,
 And the jocond rebecks sound
 To many a youth and many a maid
 Dancing in the chequered shade;
 And young and old come forth to play
 On a sunshine holyday,
 Till the livelong daylight fail:
 Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
 With stories told of many a feat,
 How fairiy Mab the junks eat:
 She was pinched and pulled, she said;
 And he, by Friar's lanthorn led,
 Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
 To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
 That ten day-labourers could not end;
 Then lies him down, the lubbar fend, 110
 And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
 And crop-full out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
 By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
 Towered cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
 In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold, 120
 With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit or arms, while both contend
 To win her grace whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,
 And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
 With mask and antique pageantry;
 Such sights as youthful Poets dream
 On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Jonson's learned sock be on,
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.
 And ever, against eating cares,
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
 Married to immortal verse,
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
 In notes with many a winding bout

Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out 140
 With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
 The melting voice through mazes running,
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony;
 That Orpheus' self may heave his head
 From golden slumber on a bed
 Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
 Such strains as would have won the ear
 Of Pluto to have quite set free
 His half-regained Eurydice. 150
 These delights if thou canst give,
 Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO

(1633)

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
 The brood of Folly without father bred !
 How little you bested,
 Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys !
 Dwell in some idle brain,
 And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
 As thick and numberless
 As the gay notes that people the sun-
 beams,
 Or likest hovering dreams,
 The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
 But, hail ! thou Goddess sage and holy ! 11
 Hail, divinest Melancholy !
 Whose saintly visage is too bright
 To hit the sense of human sight,
 And therefore to our weaker view
 O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
 Black, but such as in esteem
 Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
 Or that starred Ethiop Queen that strove
 To set her beauty's praise above 20
 The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers of-
 fended.
 Yet thou art higher far descended:
 Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
 To solitary Saturn bore;
 His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
 Such mixture was not held a stain.
 Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
 He met her, and in secret shades
 Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
 Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove. 30
 Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,
 All in a robe of darkest grain,

Flowing with majestic train,
 And sable stole of cypress lawn
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
 Come; but keep thy wonted state,
 With even step, and musing gait,
 And looks commercing with the skies,
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes: 40
 There, held in holy passion still,
 Forget thyself to marble, till
 With a sad leaden downward cast
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
 And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
 And hears the Muses in a ring
 Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
 And add to these retirèd Leisure,
 That in trim gardens takes his pleasure; 50
 But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
 Him that yon soars on golden wing,
 Guiding the fiery-wheeled throue,
 The Cherub Contemplation;
 And the mute Silence hist along,
 'Less Philomel will deign a song,
 In her sweetest saddest plight,
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
 While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
 Gently o'er the accustomed oak. 60
 Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly
 Most musical, most melancholy !
 Thee, Chauntress, oft the woods among
 I woo, to hear thy even-song;
 And, missing thee, I walk unseen
 On the dry smooth-shaven green,
 To behold the wandering Moon,
 Riding near her highest noon,
 Like one that had been led astray
 Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
 And oft, as if her head she bowed, 71
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
 Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
 I hear the far-off curfew sound,
 Over some wide-watered shore,
 Swinging slow with sullen roar;
 Or, if the air will not permit,
 Some still removed place will fit,
 Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, 80
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the cricket on the hearth,
 Or the Bellman's drowsy charm
 To bless the doors from nightly harm.
 Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
 Be seen in some high lonely tower,
 Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
 With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere

The spirit of Plato, to unfold
 What worlds or what vast regions hold 90
 The immortal mind that hath forsook
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
 And of those Dæmons that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or underground,
 Whose power hath a true consent
 With planet or with element.
 Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
 In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
 Presenting Thebs, or Pelops' line,
 Or the tale of Troy divine, 100
 Or what (though rare) of later age
 Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
 But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
 Might raise Musæus from his bower;
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
 Such notes as, warbled to the string,
 Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
 Or call up him that left half-told 110
 The story of Cambuscan bold,
 Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
 And who had Canace to wife,
 That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
 And of the wondrous horse of brass
 On which the Tartar King did ride;
 And if aught else great Bards beside
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
 Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
 Of forests, and enchantments drear, 119
 Where more is meant than meets the ear.
 Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
 Till civil-suited Morn appear,
 Not tricked and frownced, as she was wont
 With the Attic boy to hunt,
 But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
 While rocking winds are piping loud,
 Or ushered with a shower still,
 When the gust hath blown his fill,
 Ending on the rustling leaves,
 With minute-drops from off the eaves. 130
 And, when the sun begins to fling
 His flaming beams, me, Goddess, bring
 To archèd walks of twilight groves,
 And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
 Of pine, or monumental oak,
 Where the rude axe with heaved stroke
 Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
 There, in close covert, by some brook,
 Where no profaner eye may look, 140
 Hide me from Day's garish eye,
 While the bee with honeyed thigh,
 That at her flowery work doth sing,

And the waters murmuring,
 With such consort as they keep,
 Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
 And let some strange mysterious dream
 Wave at his wings, in airy stream
 Of lively portraiture displayed,
 Softly on my eyelids laid. 150
 And as I wake, sweet music breathe
 Above, about, or underneath,
 Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
 Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
 But let my due feet never fail
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,
 And love the high embowed roof,
 With antique pillars massy proof,
 And storied windows richly dight,
 Casting a dim religious light. 160
 There let the pealing organ blow,
 To the full voiced Quire below,
 In service high and anthems clear,
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
 Dissolve me into ecstasies,
 And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
 And may at last my weary age
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The hairy gown and mossy cell,
 Where I may sit and rightly spell, 170
 Of every star that Heaven doth shew,
 And every hearb that sips the dew;
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
 And I with thee will choose to live.

LYCIDAS

(1637)

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once
 more,
 Ye Myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
 I come to pluck your berries harsh and
 crude,
 And with forced fingers rude
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing
 year.
 Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
 Compels me to disturb your season due;
 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime.
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he
 knew 19
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not float upon his watery bier

Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth
spring;

Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the
string.

Hence with denial vain and coy excuse :

So may some gentle Muse

With lucky words favour *my* destined urn,

And as he passes turn, ²¹

And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the self-same
hill,

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and
rill;

Together both, ere the high lawns appeared

Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,

We drove a-field, and both together heard

What time the grey-fly winds her sultry
horn,

Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of
night,

Of till the star that rose at evening bright

Toward heaven's descent had sloped his
westerling wheel. ³¹

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;

Tempered to the oaten flute

Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with
cloven heel

From the glad sound would not be absent
long;

And old Damocetas loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art
gone,

Now thou art gone and never must return!

Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert
caves,

With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'er-
grown, ⁴⁰

And all their echoes, mourn.

The willows, and the hazel copses green,

Shall now no more be seen

Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

As killing as the canker to the rose,

Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that
graze,

Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe
wear,

When first the white-thorn blows;

Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the re-
morseless deep ⁵⁰

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lyci-
das?

For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old Bards, the famous Druids,
lie,

Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard
stream.

Ayme! I fondly dream

"Had ye been there," . . . for what could
that have done?

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus
bore,

The Muse herself, for her enchanting sor,
Whom universal nature did lament, ⁶⁰

When, by the rout that made the hideous
roar,

His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian
shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, Shepherd's
trade,

And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?

Were it not better done, as others use,

To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,

Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth
raise ⁷⁰

(That last infirmity of noble mind)

To scorn delights and live laborious days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,

And think to burst out into sudden blaze,

Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred
shears,

And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the
praise."

Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling
ears:

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal
soil,

Nor in the glistening foil

Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour
lies, ⁸⁰

But lives and spreads aloft by those pure
eyes

And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;

As he pronounces lastly on each deed,

Of so much fame in heaven expect thy
meed."

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured
flood,

Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal
reeds,

That strain I heard was of a higher mood.

But now my oat proceeds,

And listens to the Herald of the Sea,

That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon
winds,

What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle
swain ?

And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promon-
tory.

They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon
strayed :

The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark, ¹⁰⁰
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses
dark,

That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend Sire, went footing
slow,

His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Lawrought with figures dim, and on the
edge

Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with
woe.

"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dear-
est pledge ?"

Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;

Two many keys he bore of metals twain ¹¹⁰
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).

He shook his mitred locks, and stern be-
spoke : —

"How well could I have spared for thee,
young swain,

Asow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!

Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers'
feast,

And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths ! that scarce themselves know
how to hold

A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the
least ¹²⁰

That to the faithful Herdman's art be-
longs !

What recks it them ? What need they ?
They are sped;

And, when they list, their lean and flashy
songs

Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched
straw ;

The hungry sheep look up, and are not
fed,

But, swoln with wind and the rank mist
they draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim Wolf with privy
paw

Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door ¹³⁰
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no
more."

Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams ; return, Sicilian
Muse,

And call the vales, and bid them hither
cast

Their bells and flowerets of a thousand
hues.

Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers
use

Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing
brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star sparsely
looks,

Throw hither all your quaint enamelled
eyes,

That on the green turf suck the honeyed
showers, ¹⁴⁰

And purple all the ground with vernal
flowers.

Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken
dies,

The tufted crow-toe, and pale gessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked
with jet,

The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired wood-
bine,

With cowslips wan that hang the pensive
head,

And every flower that sad embroidery
wears;

Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid
lies. ¹⁵¹

For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false sur-
mise.

Ay me ! whilst thee the shores and sound-
ing seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are
hurled;

Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming
tide

Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;

Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
 Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160
 Where the great Vision of the guarded
 mount
 Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's
 hold.
 Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt
 with ruth:
 And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless
 youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep
 no more,
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery
 floor.

So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
 And tricks his beams, and with new-span-
 gled ore 170
 Flames in the forehead of the morning
 sky:

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
 Through the dear might of Him that
 walked the waves,

Where, other groves and other streams
 along,

With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and
 love.

There entertain him all the Saints above,
 In solemn troops, and sweet societies, 179
 That sing, and singing in their glory move,
 And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
 Now, Lycidas, the Shepherds weep no
 more;

Henceforth thou art the Genins of the shore,
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
 To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to the oaks
 and rills,
 While the still Morn went out with sandals
 grey:
 He touched the tender stops of various
 quills,
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
 And now the sun had stretched out all the
 hills, 190
 And now was dropt into the western bay.
 At last he rose, and twitched his mantle
 blue:
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures
 new.

SONNETS

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROM-
 WELL, ON THE PROPOSALS OF
 CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE
 COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGA-
 TION OF THE GOSPEL

(1652)

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through
 a cloud

Not of war only, but detractions rude,
 Guided by faith and matchless forti-
 tude,

To peace and truth thy glorious way hast
 ploughed,

And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
 Hast reared God's trophies, and his work
 pursued,

While Darwen stream, with blood of
 Scots imbrued,

And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises
 loud,

And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much
 remains

To conquer still; Peace hath her victo-
 ries

No less renowned than War: new foes
 arise,

Threatening to bind our souls with secular
 chains.

Help us to save free conscience from the
 paw

Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their
 maw.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN
 PIEMONT

(1655)

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints,
 whose bones

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains
 cold;

Even them who kept thy truth so pure
 of old,

When all our fathers worshiped stocks and
 stones,

Forget not: in thy book record their groans
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient
 fold

Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that
 rolled
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their
 moans
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
 To heaven. Their martyred blood and
 ashes sow
 O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth
 sway
 The triple Tyrant; that from these may
 grow
 A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

(1655)

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days in this dark world and
 wide,
 And that one Talent which is death to
 hide
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul
 more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and pre-
 sent
 My true account, lest He returning chide,
 "Doth God exact day-labour, light de-
 nied?"
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to pre-
 vent
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth
 not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts.
 Who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best.
 His state
 Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without
 rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

TO CYRIACK SKINNER.

(1655)

CYRIACK, this three years' day these eyes,
 though clear,
 To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
 Bereft of light, their seeing have for-
 got;
 Nor to their idle orbs doth sight ap-
 pear
 Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the
 year,
 Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
 Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate
 a jot
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and
 steer
 Right onward. What supports me, dost
 thou ask?
 The conscience, friend, to have lost them
 overplied
 In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
 Of which all Europe rings from side to
 side.
 This thought might lead me through the
 world's vain mask
 Content, though blind, had I no better
 guide.

PARADISE LOST

1658-1665

THE VERSE

The measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin — rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings — a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject — Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall — the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things; presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell — described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the Idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of retaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven — for 'till Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our
woe,

With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire

That Shepherd who first taught the chosen
seed

In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that
flowed

Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost pre-
fer

Before all temples the upright heart and
pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from
the first

Wast present, and, with mighty wings out-
spread,

Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the highth of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first — for Heaven hides nothing
from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell — say first what
cause

Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World be-
sides.

Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal Serpent; he it was whose
guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his
pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all
his host

Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most
High,

If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle
proud,

With vain attempt. Him the Almighty
Power

Haried headlong flaming from the ethereal
sky,

With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day
and night

To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rowling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his
doom

Reserved him to more wrath; for now the
thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful
eyes,

That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast
hate.

At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from
those flames

No light; but rather darkness visible
Served onely to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where
peace

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed

With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison or-
dained

In utter darkness, and their portion set,

As far removed from God and light of
Heaven

As from the centre thrice to the utmost
pole.

Oh how unlike the place from whence they
fell!

There the companions of his fall, o'er-
whelmed

With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous
fire,

He soon discerns; and, weltering by his
side,

One next himself in power, and next in
crime,

Long after known in Palestine, and named
BEELZEBUB. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called SATAN, with
bold words

Breaking the horrid silence, thus began: —

“If thou beest he — but Oh how fallen!
how changed

From him! — who, in the happy realms of
light,

Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst
outshine

Myriads, though bright — if he whom mu-
tual league,

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,

Joined with me once, now misery hath
joined

In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen: so much the
stronger proved

He with his thunder: and till then who
knew

The force of those dire arms? Yet not for
those,

Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,

Though changed in outward lustre, that
fixed mind,

And high disdain from sense of injured
merit,

That with the Mightiest raised me to con-
tend,

And to the fierce contention brought
along

Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me pre-
ferring,

His utmost power with adverse power op-
posed

In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,

And shook his throne. What though the
field be lost ?

All is not lost — the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield;
And what is else not to be overcome. 109
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire — that were low in-
deed;

That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength
of Gods,
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great
event,

In arms not worse, in foresight much ad-
vanced,

We may with more successful hope re-
solve 120

To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs', and in the excess of
joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of
Heaven."

So spake the apostate Angel, though in
pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep de-
spair;

And him thus answered soon his bold Com-
peer: —

"O Prince, O Chief of many throned
Powers

That led the unbattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful
deeds 130

Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual
King,

And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or
fate !

Too well I see and rue the dire event
That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty
host

In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit re-
mains

Invincible, and vigour soon returns, 140
Though all our glory extinct, and happy
state

Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if He our Conqueror (whom I
now

Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such
force as ours)

Have left us this our spirit and strength
entire,

Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be, 150
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep ?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment ? "

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-
Fiend replied: —

"Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure —
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which oftentimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined
aim.

But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit, 170
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphu-
rous hail,

Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the
thunder,

Winged with red lightning and impetuous
rage,

Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases
now

To bellow through the vast and boundless
Deep.

Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and
wild, 180

The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid
flames

Casts pale and dreadful ? Thither let us
tend

From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most of-
fend

Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from
hope, 190

If not what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest Mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts be-
sides

Prone on the flood, extended long and
large,

Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on
Jove,

Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast 200
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway
foam,

The pilot of some small night-foundered
skiff,

Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-
Fiend lay,

Chained on the burning lake; nor ever
thence 210

Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the
will

And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring
forth

Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On Man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance
poured. 220

Forthwith upright he rears from off the
pool

His mighty stature; on each hand the
flames

Driven backward slope their pointing spires,
and, rowled

In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his
flight

Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights — if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue as when the
force 230

Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found
the sole

Of unblest feet. Him followed his next
Mate;

Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian
flood

As gods, and by their own recovered
strength, 240

Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the
clime,"

Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heaven? — this
mournful gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since
He

Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: fardest from Him is
best,

Whom reason hath equalled, force hath
made supreme

Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! 250
hail,

Infernal World! and thou, profoundest
Hell,

Receive thy new possessor — one who
brings

A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of
Heaven.

What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here
at least

We shall be free; the Almighty hath not
built

Here for his envy, will not drive us
hence: 260

Here we may reign secure; and, in my
choice,

To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in
Heaven.

But wherefore let we then our faithful
friends,

The associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their
part

In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in
Hell?" 270

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered:—"Leader of those armies
bright

Which, but the Omnipotent, none could
have foiled!

If once they hear that voice, their liveliest
pledge

Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so
oft

In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they
lie

Grovvelling and prostrate on yon lake of
fire, 280

As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fall—such a pernicious highth!"

He scarce had ceased when the superior
Fiend

Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous
shield,

Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast. The broad circumfer-
ence

Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose
orb

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,

Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.

His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast

Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand—
He walked with, to support uneasy steps

Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime

Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and called

His legions—Angel Forms, who lay en-
tranced 301

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the
brooks

In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched imbower; or scattered
sedge

Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves
o'erthrew

Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who bebelled
From the safe shore their floating car-
cases 320

And broken chariot-wheels. So thick be-
strown,

Abject and lost, lay these, covering the
flood,

Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded:—"Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the Flower of Heaven—once
yours; now lost,

If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this
place

After the toil of battle to repose 329
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find

To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn

To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rowling in the flood

With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates dis-
cern

The advantage, and, descending, tread us
down

Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?—

Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!" 330

They heard, and were abashed, and up
they sprung

Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they

dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well
awake.

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not
feel;

Yet to their General's voice they soon
obeyed

Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,

Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy
 cloud ³⁴⁰
 Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
 That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh
 hung
 Like Night, and darkened all the land of
 Nile;
 So numberless were those bad Angels seen
 Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
 Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
 Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
 Of their great Sultan waving to direct
 Their course, in even balance down they
 light
 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the
 plain: ³⁵⁰
 A multitude like which the populous North
 Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous
 sons
 Came like a deluge on the South, and
 spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
 Forthwith, from every squadron and each
 band,
 The heads and leaders thither haste where
 stood
 Their great Commander — godlike Shapes,
 and Forms
 Excelling human; princely Dignities;
 And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on
 thrones, ³⁶⁰
 Though of their names in Heavenly records
 now
 Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
 By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
 Got them new names, till, wandering o'er
 the earth,
 Through God's high sufferance for the trial
 of man,
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and the invisible
 Glory of Him that made them to trans-
 form ³⁷⁰
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And devils to adore for deities:
 Then were they known to men by various
 names,
 And various idols through the heathen
 world.
 Say, Muse, their names then known, who
 first, who last,

Roused from the slumber on that fiery
 couch,
 At their great Emperor's call, as next in
 worth
 Came singly where he stood on the bare
 strand,
 While the promiscuous crowd stood yet
 aloof. ³⁸⁰
 The chief were those who, from the pit
 of Hell
 Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst
 fix
 Their seats, long after, next the seat of
 God,
 Their altars by His altar, gods adored
 Among the nations round, and durst abide
 Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
 Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
 Within His sanctuary itself their shrines,
 Abominations; and with cursèd things
 His holy rites and solemn feasts pro-
 faned, ³⁹⁰
 And with their darkness durst affront His
 light.
 First, Moloch, horrid King, besmeared with
 blood
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
 Though, for the noise of drums and tim-
 brels loud,
 Their children's cries unheard that passed
 through fire
 To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
 Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,
 In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
 Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest
 heart ⁴⁰⁰
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
 His temple right against the temple of
 God
 On that opprobrious hill, and made his
 grove
 The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet
 thence
 And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
 Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's
 sons,
 From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
 Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
 And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
 The flowery dale of Sibma clad with
 vines, ⁴¹⁰
 And Eleale to the Asphaltick Pool:
 Peor his other name, when he enticed
 Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,

To do him wanton rites, which cost them
woe.

Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they who, from the border-
dering flood

Of old Enphrates to the brook that parts 420
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general
names

Of *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth* — those male,
These feminine. For Spirits, when they
please,

Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of
bones,

Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape
they choose,

Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes, 430
And works of love or enmity fulfil.

For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented
left

His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads, as
low

Bowed down in battle, sunk before the
spear

Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent
horns;

To whose bright image nightly by the
moon 440

Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king whose heart, though
large,

Beguil'd by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. *Thammuz* came next be-
hind,

Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native
rock 450

Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of *Thammuz* yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch

Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive
Ark

Maimed his brute image, head and hands
lopt off,

In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge, 460
Where he fell flat and shamed his worship-
ers:

Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple
high

Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the
coast

Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed *Rimmon*, whose delightful
seat

Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was
bold: 470

A leper once he lost, and gained a king —
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these
appeared

A crew who, under names of old renown —
Osiris, *Isis*, *Orus*, and their train —

With monstrous shapes and sorceries
abused

Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek 480
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish
forms

Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold
composed

The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazed ox —
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled with one
stroke

Both her first-born and all her bleating
gods.

Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more
lewd 490

Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to
love

Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
(Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest

Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
 With lust and violence the house of God ?
 In courts and palaces he also reigns,
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
 And injury and outrage; and, when night
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the
 sons 501

Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that
 night

In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
 Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.

These were the prime in order and in
 might:

The rest were long to tell; though far re-
 nowned

The Ionian gods — of Javan's issue held
 Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and
 Earth,

Their boasted parents; — *Titan*, Heaven's
 first-born, 510

With his enormous brood, and birthright
 seized

By younger *Saturn*: he from mightier Jove,
 His own and Rhea's son, like measure
 found;

So *Jove* usurping reigned. These, first in
 Crete

And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
 Of old Olympus ruled the middle air,
 Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian
 cliff,

Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
 Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
 Flew over Adria to the Hesperian fields, 520
 And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost
 Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but
 with looks

Downcast and damp; yet such wherein ap-
 peared

Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found
 their Chief

Not in despair, to have found themselves
 not lost

In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
 Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted
 pride

Soon recollecting, with high words, that
 bore

Semblance of worth, not substance, gently
 raised

Their fainting courage, and dispelled their
 fears: 530

Then straight commands that, at the war-
 like sound

Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
 His mighty standard. That proud honour
 claimed

Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
 Who forthwith from the glittering staff
 unfurled

The imperial ensign; which, full high ad-
 vanced,

Shon like a meteor streaming to the wind,
 With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,
 Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
 Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: 540
 At which the universal host up-sent

A shout that tore Hell's concave, and be-
 yond

Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
 All in a moment through the gloom were
 seen

Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
 With orient colours waving: with them rose
 A forest huge of spears; and thronging
 helms

Appeared, and serried shields in thick ar-
 ray

Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood 550
 Of flutes and soft recorders — such as
 raised

To highth of noblest temper heroes old
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage
 Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and un-
 moved

With dread of death to flight or foul re-
 treat;

Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
 With solemn touches troubled thoughts,
 and chase

Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow
 and pain

From mortal or immortal minds. Thus
 they, 559

Breathing united force with fixed thought,
 Moved on in silence to soft pipes that
 charmed

Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil.
 And now

Advanced in view they stand — a horrid
 front

Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in
 guise

Of warriors old, with ordered spear and
 shield,

Awaiting what command their mighty Chief

Had to impose. He through the armed
files

Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views — their order
due,

Their visages and stature as of Gods; 570
Their number last he sums. And now his
heart

Distends with pride, and, hardening in his
strength,

Glories: for never, since created Man,
Met such imbodied force as, named with
these,

Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes — though all the
giant brood

Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each
side

Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what re-
sounds

In fable or romance of Uther's son, 580

Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,

Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage
fell

By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread Commander. He, above the
rest

In shape and gesture proudly eminent, 590
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not
lost

All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-
risen

Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the
moon,

In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet
shon

Above them all the Archangel: but his
face 600

Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and
care

Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold

The fellows of his crime, the followers
rather

(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain —
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours
flung 610

For his revolt — yet faithful how they
stood,

Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain
pines,

With singed top their stately growth,
though bare,

Stands on the blasted heath. He now pre-
pared

To speak; whereat their doubled ranks
they bend

From wing to wing, and half enclose him
round

With all his peers: Attention held them
mute.

Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of
scorn,

Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth:
at last 620

Words interwove with sighs found out
their way: —

“O myriads of immortal Spirits! O
Powers

Matchless, but with the Almighty! — and
that strife

Was not inglorious, though the event was
dire,

As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of
mind,

Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have
feared

How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know re-
pulse? 630

For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-
ascend,

Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?
For me, he witness all the host of Heaven,

If counsels different, or danger shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who
reigns

Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state 640

Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed —
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.

Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,

So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked: our better part remains

To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, Who overcomes

By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new Worlds; whereof
so ripe 650

There went a fame in Heaven that He ere long

Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption — thither, or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts

Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired; 660

For who can think submission? War, then, war

Open or understood, must be resolved."

He spake; and, to confirm his words,
out-flew

Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs

Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged

Against the Highest and fierce with grasped arms

Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,

Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top 670

Belched fire and rowling smoke; the rest entire

Shon with a glossy scurf — undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,

A numerous brigad hastened: as when bands

Of pioners, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on —

Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts 680

Were always downward bent, admiring more

The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,

Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first

Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the Centre, and with impious hands

Rifted the bowels of their mother Earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew

Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire 690

That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best

Deserve the pretious bane. And here let those

Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell

Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,

Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,

And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour

What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.

Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire 700

Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore
Severing each kind, and scummed the bul-
lion-dross.

A third as soon had formed within the ground

A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;

As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710

Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet —
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid

With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures
graven:

The roof was fretted gold. Not Babilon
Nor great Alcaïro such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to inshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat ⁷²⁰
Their kings, when Ægypt with Assyria
strove

In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight
the doors,

Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude ⁷³⁰
Admiring entered; and the work some
praise,

And some the Architect. His hand was
known

In Heaven by many a towered structure
high,

Where sceptred Angels held their resi-
dence,

And sat as Princes, whom the supreme
King

Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he
fell ⁷⁴⁰

From Heaven they fabled, thrown by an-
gry Jove

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from
morn

To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle. Thus they
relate,

Erring; for he with this rebellious ront
Fell long before; nor aught availed him
now

To have built in Heaven high towers; nor
did he scape

By all his engines, but was headlong
sent, ⁷⁵⁰

With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.
Meanwhile the wingèd Haralda, by com-
mand

Of sovran power, with awful ceremony

And trumpet's sound, throughout the host
proclaim

A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandæmonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons
called

From every band and squared regiment
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands troop-
ing came ⁷⁶⁰

Attended. All access was thronged; the
gates

And porches wide, but chief the spacious
hall

(Though like a covered field, where cham-
pions bold

Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's
chair

Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in
the air,

Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings.
As bees

In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus
rides,

Pour forth their populous youth about the
hive ⁷⁷⁰

In clusters; they among fresh dews and
flowers

Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and
confer

Their state-affairs: so thick the aerie crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the
signal given,

Behold a wonder! They but now who
seemed

In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow
room

Throng numberless — like that pygmean
race ⁷⁸⁰

Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the
Moon

Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course: they, on their
mirth and dance

Intent, with jocond music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart re-
bounds.

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were
at large, ⁷⁹⁰
Though without number still, amidst the
hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like them-
selves,

The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence
then,
And summons read, the great consult be-
gan.

BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan—to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

HIGH on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshon the wealth of Æmus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest
hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and
gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success
untaught, ⁹
His proud imaginations thus displayed:—
“Powers and Dominions, Deities of
Heaven!—
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and
fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: from this de-
scent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from
no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second
fate!—
Me though just right, and the fixed laws
of Heaven,

Did first create your leader—next, free
choice,
With what besides in council or in fight ²⁰
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much
more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier
state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might
draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer’s
aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest
share
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no
good ³⁰
For which to strive, no strife can grow up
there
From faction: for none sure will claim in
Hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage,
then,
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now re-
turn
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and by what best
way, ⁴⁰
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise may
speak.”
He ceased; and next him Moloch, scorp-
tred king,
Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest
Spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by
despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be
deemed

Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or
worse,

He recked not, and these words thereafter
spake:—

“My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,⁵⁰
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need;
not now.

For, while they sit contriving, shall the
rest—

Millions that stand in arms, and longing
wait

The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-
place

Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of His tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,⁶⁰
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at
once

O'er Heaven's high towers to force resist-
less way,

Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the
noise

Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange
fire,⁶⁹

His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe!
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken
rear

Insulting, and pursued us through the
Deep,

With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy,
then;⁸¹

The event is feared! Should we again
provoke

Our stronger, some worse way his wrath
may find

To our destruction, if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed! What can
be worse

Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss,
condemned

In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,⁹¹
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than
thus,

We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to in-
cense

His utmost ire? which, to the highth en-
raged,

Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential—happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being!—
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst¹⁰⁰
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal Throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.”

He ended frowning, and his look de-
nounced

Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up
rose

Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
A fairer person lost not Heaven; he
seemed¹¹⁰

For dignity composed, and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow; though his
tongue

Dropt manna, and could make the worse
appear

The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were
low—

To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the
ear,

And with persuasive accent thus began:—
“I should be much for open war, O
Peers,¹¹⁹

As not behind in hate, if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to
cast

Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope

Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven
are filled 120

With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure
wing

Scout far and wide into the realm of
Night,

Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our
way

By force, and at our heels all Hell should
rise

With blackest insurrection to confound
Heaven's purest light, yet our great En-
emy,

All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolled, and the ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel 140

Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate

The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
And that must end us; that must be our
cure —

To be no more. Sad cure! for who would
lose,

Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eter-
nity,

To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night, 150

Devoid of sense and motion? And who
knows,

Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? How he can
Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.

Will He, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike through impotence or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger whom his anger saves
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we,
then?'

Say they who counsel war; 'we are de-
creed, 160

Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then,
worst —

Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when we fled again, pursued and
strook

With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and be-
sought

The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then
seemed

A refuge from those wounds. Or when we
lay

Chained on the burning lake? That sure
was worse.

What if the breath that kindled those grim
fires, 170

Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold
rage,

And plunge us in the flames; or from
above

Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What
if all

Her stores were opened, and this firma-
ment

Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous
fall

One day upon our heads; while we per-
haps,

Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and
prey 181

Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespite, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end? This would be
worse.

War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or
guile

With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose
eye

Views all things at one view? He from
Heaven's highth 190

All these our motions vain sees and de-
rides,

Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and
wiles.

Shall we, then, live thus vile — the race of
Heaven

Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer
here

Chains and these torments? Better these
than worse,

By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust

That so ordains. This was at first resolved,²⁰¹

If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.

I laugh when those who at the spear are bold

And ventrous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear

What yet they know must follow — to endure

Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now

Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,²⁰⁹

Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit

His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not in mind us not offending, satisfied

With what is punished; whence these raging fires

Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.

Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed

In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;²²⁰

Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance,
what change

Worth waiting — since our present lot appears

For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,

Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake: —

"Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven

We war, if war be best, or to regain²³⁰
Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then

May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield

To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.

The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us

Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme

We overpower? Suppose he should relent,

And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we²³⁹

Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing

Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task

In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome

Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,

By force impossible, by leave obtained²⁵⁰
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own

Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,

Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear

Then most conspicuous when great things of small,

Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain²⁶¹

Through labour and indurance. This deep world

Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst

Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire

Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,

Mustering their rage, and Heaven reascends Hell!

As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil²⁷⁰

Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;

Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise

Magnificence; and what can Heaven shew more ?

Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove

The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may 280
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I
advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled

The assembly as when hollow rocks retain

The sound of blustering winds, which all night long

Had roused the sea, now with boarse cadence lull

Searing men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,

Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard 290

As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,

Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear

Of thunder and the sword of Michael
Wrought still within them; and no less desire

To found this nether empire, which might rise,

By policy and long process' of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.

Which when Beëlzebub perceived — than whom,

Satan except, none higher sat — with grave 300

Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven

Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shon,

Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear

The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look

Drew audience and attention still as night

Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake: —

"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven, 310

Ethereal Virtues ! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called

Princes of Hell ? for so the popular vote
Inclines — here to continue, and build up

here
A growing empire; doubtless ! while we dream,

And know not that the King of Heaven
bath doomed

This place our dungeon — not our safe retreat

Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league

Banded against his throne, but to remain 320

In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,

Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude. For He, be sure,

In highth or depth, still first and last will reign

Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend

His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.

What sit we then projecting peace and war ?
War hath determined us and foiled with loss 330

Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Voutsafed or sought; for what peace will be given

To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment

Inflicted ? and what pence can we return,
But, to our power, hostility and hate,

Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,

Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice

In doing what we most in suffering feel ? 340
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade

Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault
or siege,

Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find

Some easier enterprise ? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven

Err not) — another World, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this
time

To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favoured
more 350

Of Him who rules above; so was His will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an
oath

That shook Heaven's whole circumference
confrined.

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to
learn

What creatures there inhabit, of what
mould

Or substance, how endued, and what their
power

And where their weakness: how attempted
best,

By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be
shut,

And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie
exposed, 360

The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achieved

By sudden onset — either with Hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess

All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,

Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting
hand

Abolish his own works. This would sur-
pass 370

Common revenge, and interrupt His joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise

In His disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall
curse

Their frail original, and faded bliss —
Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth

Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub

Pleaded his devilish counsel — first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for
whence, 380

But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race

Of mankind in one root, and Earth with
Hell

To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still
serves

His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those Infernal States, and
joy

Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus
renews: —

"Well have ye judged, well ended long
debate, 390

Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the low-
est deep

Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient Seat — perhaps in view

Of those bright confines, whence, with
neighbouring arms,

And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild
zone

Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,
Secure, and at the brightening orient beam

Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious
air, 400

To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom
shall we send

In search of this new World? whom shall
we find

Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering
feet

The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out

His uncount way, or spread his aerie flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings

Over the vast Abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy Isle? What strength, what art,
can then 410

Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations
thick

Of Angels watching round? Here he had
need

All circumspection: and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we
send

The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared

To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, 420

Pondering the danger with deep thoughts;
and each

In other's countenance read his own dis-
may,

Astonished. None among the choice and
prime

Of those Heaven-warring champions could
be found

So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchical pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus
spake:—

“O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean
Thrones! 430

With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is
the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to
Light.

Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.

These passed, if any pass, the void pro-
found

Of unessential Night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of be-
ing 440

Threatens him, plunged in that abortive
gulf.

If thence he scape, into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard es-
cape?

But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovereignty, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if
anight proposed

And judged of public moment in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I as-
sume 450

These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him
due

Of hazard more as he above the rest
High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty
Powers,

Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend at
home,

While here shall be our home, what best
may ease

The present misery, and render Hell 459
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch
Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad

Through all the coasts of dark destruction
seek

Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me.” Thus say-
ing, rose

The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they
feared, 470

And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn.

But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his
voice

Forbidding; and at once with him they
rose.

Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him
they bend

With awful reverence prone, and as a God
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
Nor failed they to express how much they
praised 480

That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should
boast

Their specious deeds on earth, which glory
excites,

Or close ambition varnished o’er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations
dark

Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
As, when from mountain-tops the dusky
clouds

Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps,
o’erspread 489

Heaven’s cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o’er the darkened lantskip snow or
shower,

If chance the radiant sun, with farewell
sweet,

Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating
herds

Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming
peace,

Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife 500
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars

Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction
wait!

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and
forth

In order came the grand Infernal Peers:
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and
seemed

Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp
supreme, 510

And god-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed
With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great re-
sult:

Toward the four winds four speedy Cheru-
bim

Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained; the hollow
Abyss

Heard far and wide, and all the host of
Hell

With deafening shout returned them loud
acclaim. 520

Thence more at ease their minds, and some-
what raised

By false presumptuous hope, the ranged
Powers

Disband; and, wandering, each his several
way

Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeli-
est find

Truce to his restless thoughts, and enter-
tain

The irksome hours, till his great Chief
return.

Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games or Pythian
fields; 530

Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the
goal

With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads
form:

As when, to warn prond cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies
rush

To battle in the clouds; before each van
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch
their spears,

Till thickest legions close; with feats of
arms

From either end of heaven the welkin
burns.

Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the
air 540

In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild
uproar:—

As when Alcides, from Œthalia crowned
With conquest, felt the evenenomed robe,
and tore

Through pain up by the roots Thessalian
pines,

And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing

With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or
Chance. 552

Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal
sing?)

Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more
sweet

(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the
Sense)

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned
high

Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and
Fate—

Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge ab-
solute— 560

And found no end, in wandering mazes
lost.

Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!—
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdured breast
With stubborn patience as with triple
steel.

Another part, in squadrons and gross
bands, 570

On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the
banks

Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful
streams —

Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegge-
ton, 580

Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with
rage.

Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethæ, the river of oblivion, rowls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being for-
gets —

Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and
pain.

Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual
storms

Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm
land

Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin
seems 590

Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiatra and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parch-
ing air

Burns froze, and cold performs the effect
of fire.

Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter
change

Of fierce extremes, extremes by change
more fierce,

From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to
pine 601

Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time, — thence hurried back to
fire.

They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to
reach

The tempting stream, with one small drop
to lose

In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the
attempt, 610

Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies

All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous
bands,

With shuddering horror pale, and eyes
aghast,

Viewed first their lamentable lot, and
found

No rest. Through many a dark and dreary
vale

They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, 620
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and
shades of death —

A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;

Where all life dies, death lives, and Na-
ture breeds,

Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious
things,

Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear con-
ceived,

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and
Man,

Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest
design, 630

Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates
of Hell

Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes
the left;

Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then
soars

Up to the fiery concave towering high.

As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds

Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants

bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading
flood, 640

Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so
seemed

Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid
roof,

And thrice threefold the gates; three folds
were brass,

Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,

Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there
sat

On either side a formidable Shape.
 The one seemed woman to the waist, and
 fair, 650
 But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
 Voluminous and vast — a serpent armed
 With mortal sting. About her middle
 round
 A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
 With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and
 rung
 A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would
 creep,
 If aught disturbed their noise, into her
 womb,
 And kennel there; yet there still barked
 and howled
 Within unseen. Far less abhorred than
 these
 Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that
 parts 660
 Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
 Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when,
 called
 In secret, riding through the air she comes,
 Lured with the smell of infant blood, to
 dance
 With Lapland witches, while the labouring
 moon
 Eclipses at their charms. The other
 Shape —
 If shape it might be called that shape had
 none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
 Or substance might be called that shadow
 seemed.
 For each seemed either — black it stood as
 Night, 670
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
 And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed
 his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
 Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
 The monster moving onward came as fast
 With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he
 strode.
 The undaunted Fiend what this might be
 admired —
 Admired, not feared (God and his Son ex-
 cept,
 Created thing naught valued he nor
 shunned),
 And with disdainful look thus first be-
 gan: — 680
 “Whence and what art thou, execrable
 Shape,

That dar’st, though grim and terrible, ad-
 vance
 Thy miscreated front athwart my way
 To yonder gates? Through them I mean
 to pass,
 That be assured, without leave asked of
 thee.
 Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by
 proof,
 Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of
 Heaven.”
 To whom the Goblin, full of wrath,
 replied: —
 “Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
 Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith,
 till then 690
 Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s
 sons,
 Conjured against the Highest — for which
 both thou
 And they, outcast from God, are here con-
 demned
 To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
 And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of
 Heaven,
 Hell-doomed, and breath’st defiance here
 and scorn,
 Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee
 more,
 Thy king and lord? Back to thy punish-
 ment,
 False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,
 Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue 701
 Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this
 dart
 Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt
 before.”
 So spake the grisely Terror, and in
 shape,
 So speaking and so threatening, grew ten-
 fold
 More dreadful and deform. On the other
 side,
 Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
 Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
 That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
 In the artick sky, and from his horrid
 hair 710
 Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the
 head
 Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
 No second stroke intend; and such a frown
 Each cast at the other as when two black
 clouds,

With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
 Over the Caspian, — then stand front to front
 Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
 To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
 So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
 Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood; 720
 For never but once more was either like
 To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
 Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
 Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
 Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
 Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.
 "O father, what intends thy hand," she cried,
 "Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
 Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
 Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom? 730
 For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
 At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
 What'er his wranthe, which He calls justice, bids —
 His wranthe, which one day will destroy ye both!"
 She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
 Forbore: then these to her Satan returned: —
 "So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
 Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
 Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
 What it intends, till first I know of thee
 What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why, 741
 In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
 Me father, and that fantasm call'st my son.
 I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
 Sight more detestable than him and thee."
 To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied: —
 "Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem
 Now in thine eye so foul? — once deemed
 so fair

In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight 749
 Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
 In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
 All on a sudden miserable pain
 Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
 In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
 Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
 Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
 Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
 Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
 All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid 759
 At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
 Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
 I pleased, and with attractive graces won
 The most averse — thee chiefly, who, full oft
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
 Becam'st enamoured; and such joy thou took'st
 With me in secret that my womb conceived
 A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
 And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein remained
 (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
 Clear victory; to our part loss and rout 770
 Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
 Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
 Into this Deep; and in the general fall
 I also: at which time this powerful Key
 Into my hands was given, with charge to keep
 These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
 Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
 Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest, 781
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
 Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
 Transformed: but he my inbred enemy

Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out
Death!

Hell trembled at the hideous name, and
sighed

From all her caves, and back resounded
Death!

I fled; but he pursued (though more, it
seems, ⁷⁹⁰)

Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter
far,

Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Engendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless
cry

Surround me, as thou saw'st — hourly con-
ceived

And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me: for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and
gnaaw

My bowels, their repast; then, bursting
forth ⁸⁰⁰

Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me
round,

That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits

Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets
them on,

And me, his parent, would full soon de-
vour

For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved, and knows
that I

Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be: so Fate pro-
nounced.

But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope ⁸¹¹
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal
dint,

Save He who reigns above, none can re-
sist."

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his
lore

Soon learned, now milder, and thus an-
swered smooth: —

"Dear daughter — since thou claim'st
me for thy sire,

And my fair son here show'st me, the dear
pledge

Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and
joys

Then sweet, now sad to mention, through
dire change ⁸²⁰

Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of —
know,

I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of
pain

Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly
host

Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I
go

This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded Deep, and through the void
immense

To search, with wandering quest, a place
foretold ⁸³⁰

Should be — and, by concurring signs, ere
now

Created vast and round — a place of bliss
In the pourliewes of Heaven; and therein
placed

A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more
removed,

Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent mul-
titude,

Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or
aught

Than this more secret, now designed, I
haste

To know; and, this once known, shall soon
return,

And bring ye to the place where thou and
Death ⁸⁴⁰

Shall dwell at ease, and up and down un-
seen

Wing silently the buxom air, imbalm'd
With odours. There ye shall be fed and
filled

Immeasurably; all things shall be your
prey."

He ceased; for both seemed highly
pleased, and Death

Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his
maw

Destined to that good hour. No less re-
joiced

His mother bad, and thus bespake her
Sire: —

"The key of this infernal Pit, by due
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful
King, ⁸⁵¹

I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
But what owe I to His commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me
down

Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-
born — 860

Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compassed
round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels
feed?

Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring
me soon

To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall
reign

At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without
end." 870

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, toward the gate rowling her bestial
train,

Forthwith the huge porcellis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian
Powers

Could once have moved; then in the key-
hole turns

The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,

With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, 880
The infernal doors, and on their hinges
grate

Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom
shook

Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
Excelled her power: the gates wide open
stood,

That with extended wings a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass
through

With horse and chariots ranked in loose
array;

So wide they stood, and like a furnace-
mouth

Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy
flame. 889

Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary Deep — a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth,
and highth,

And time, and place, are lost; where eld-
est Night

And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four cham-
pions fierce,

Strive here for maistrie, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms: they around the
flag 900

Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy; sharp, smooth, swift,
or slow,

Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and
poise

Their lighter wings. To whom these most
adhere

He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more imbroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her
grave, 911

Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds —
Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a
while,

Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less
pealed 920

With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona
storms

With all her battering engines, bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn

The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad
vans

He spreads for flight, and, in the surging
smoke

Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many
a league,

As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930

Andacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity. All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down
he drops

Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill
chance,

The strong rebuff of some tumultuous
cloud.

Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed —

Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land — nigh foundered, on
he fares, ⁹⁴⁰

Treading the crude consistence, half on
foot,

Half flying; behoves him now both oar and
sail.

As when a gryphon through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspiæ, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough,
dense, or rare,

With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues
his way,

And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps,
or flies. ⁹⁵⁰

At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his
ear

With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness
lies

Bordering on light; when straight behold
the throne

Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread ⁹⁶⁰
Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him
enthroned

Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Ramour next, and
Chance,

And Tumult, and Confusion, all imbroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various
mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: —
“Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,

Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy ⁹⁷⁰
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but, by con-
straint

Wandering this darksome desert, as my
way

Lies through your spacious empire up to
light,

Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,
What readiest path leads where your
gloomy bounds

Confine with Heaven; or, if some other
place,

From your dominion won, the Ethereal
King

Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound. Direct my
course: ⁹⁸⁰

Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once
more

Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be the advantage all, mine the re-
venge!”

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incom-
posed,

Answered: — “I know thee, stranger, who
thou art — ⁹⁹⁰

That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heaven's King, though
overthrown.

I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frightened
Deep,

With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-
gates

Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend, ¹⁰⁰⁰
Encroached on still through our intestine
broils

Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first,
Hell,

Your dungeon, stretching far and wide be-
neath;

Now lately Heaven and Earth, another
world

Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden
chain

To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell!

If that way be your walk, you have not far; So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;

Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply, 1010

But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,

With fresh alacrity and force renewed Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire, Into the wild expanse, and through the shock

Of fighting elements, on all sides round Environed, wins his way; harder beset And more endangered than when Argo passed

Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks,

Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool steered. 1020

So he with difficulty and labour hard Moved on. With difficulty and labour he; But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,

Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain, Following his track (such was the will of Heaven)

Paved after him a broad and beaten way Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,

From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb

Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse 1030

With easy intercourse pass to and fro To tempt or punish mortals, except whom God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven

Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins

Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire, As from her outmost works, a broken foe, With tumult less and with less hostile din; That Satan with less toil, and now with ease, 1041

Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,

And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;

Or in the emptier waste, resembling air, Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold

Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide

In circuit, undetermined square or round, With opal towers and battlements adorned Of living sapphire, once his native seat, 1050

And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain, This pendent World, in bigness as a star Of smallest magnitude close by the moon. Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,

Accurst, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

BOOK III

[Lines 1-55. THE INVOCATION TO LIGHT]

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!

Or of the Eternal coeternal beam

May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,

And never but in unapproachèd light Dwelt from eternity — dwelt then in thee,

Bright effluence of bright essence increate! Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal Stream,

Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,

Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice

Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest 10 The rising World of waters dark and deep, Won from the void and formless Infinite!

Thee I revisit now with bolder wing, Escaped the Stygian Pool, though long detained

In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight, Through utter and through middle Darkness borne,

With other notes than to the Orphean lyre I sung of Chaos and eternal Night, Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down

The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, 20

Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowl in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their
orbs,

Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks be-
neath,

That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling
flow,

Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
(So were I equalled with them in renown!)
Blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the
year

Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or
morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's
rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of
men
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge
fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and
rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut
out.
So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her
powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from
thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and
tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

BOOK IV

THE ARGUMENT

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions — fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits, in the shape of a Cormorant, on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death, and thereon intends to found his temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the Deep, and passed at noon by his Sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the Mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest: their power described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he who
saw
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now,
While time was, our first parents had been
warned
The coming of their secret Foe, and scaped,
Haply so scaped, his mortal snare! For
now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came
down,
The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell.
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to
boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the
birth
Now rowling, boils in his tumultuous
breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom
stir
The hell within him; for within him Hell

He brings, and round about him, nor from
 Hell 21
 One step, no more than from himself, can
 fly
 By change of place. Now conscience wakes
 despair
 That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
 Of what he was, what is, and what must
 be
 Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings
 must ensue!
 Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his
 view
 Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;
 Sometimes towards Heaven and the full-
 blazing Sun,
 Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
 Then, much revolving, thus in sighs be-
 gan:— 31
 "O thou that, with surpassing glory
 crowned,
 Look'st from thy sole dominion like the
 god
 Of this new World—at whose sight all the
 stars
 Hide their diminished heads—to thee I
 call,
 But with no friendly voice, and add thy
 name.
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
 That bring to my remembrance from what
 state
 I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
 Till pride and worse ambition threw me
 down, 40
 Warring in Heaven against Heaven's
 matchless King!
 Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such re-
 turn
 From me, whom he created what I was
 In that bright eminence, and with his good
 Unbraided none; nor was his service hard.
 What could be less than to afford him
 praise,
 The easiest recompense, and pay him
 thanks,
 How due? Yet all his good proved ill in
 me,
 And wrought but malice. Lifted up so
 high,
 I 'dained subjection, and thought one step
 higher 50
 Would set me highest, and in a moment
 quit
 The debt immense of endless gratitude,

So burthensome, still paying, still to owe;
 Forgetful what from him I still received;
 And understood not that a grateful mind
 By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
 Indebted and discharged—what burden
 then?
 Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
 Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
 Thou happy; no unbounded hope had
 raised 60
 Ambition. Yet why not? Some other
 Power
 As great might have aspired, and me,
 though mean,
 Drawn to his part. But other Powers as
 great
 Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
 Or from without to all temptations armed!
 Hadst thou the same free will and power
 to stand?
 Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or
 what, to accuse,
 But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
 Be then his love accursed, since, love or
 hate,
 To me alike it deals eternal woe. 70
 Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy
 will
 Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
 Me miserable! which way shall I fly
 Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
 Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
 And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
 Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
 O, then, at last relent! Is there no place
 Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
 None left but by submission; and that
 word 81
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the Spirits beneath, whom I se-
 duced
 With other promises and other vaunts
 Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
 The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
 How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
 Under what torments inwardly I groan.
 While they adore me on the throne of
 Hell,
 With diadem and sceptre high advanced, 90
 The lower still I fall, only supreme
 In misery: such joy ambition finds!
 But say I could repent, and could obtain,
 By act of grace, my former state; how
 soon

Would highth recal high thoughts, how soon
unsay

What feigued submission swore! Ease
would recant

Vows made in pain, as violent and void
(For never can true reconciliation grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced
so deep);

Which would but lead me to a worse re-
lapse

And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission, bought with double
smart.

This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging,
peace.

All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind, created, and for him this World!
So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell
fear,

Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will
reign;

As Man ere long, and this new World,
shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed
his face,

Thrice changed with pale — ire, envy. and
despair;

Which marred his borrowed visage, and
betrayed

Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For Heavenly minds from such distempers
foul

Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
Each perturbation smoothed with outward
calm,

Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly
shew,

Deep malice to conceal, couched with re-
venge:

Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel, once warned; whose eye pursued
him down

The way he went, and on the Assyrian
mount

Saw him disfigured, more than could be-
fall

Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He marked and mad demeanour, then
alone,

As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.

So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure
green,

As with a rural mound, the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thickest overgrown, grotesque and
wild,

Access denied; and overhead up-grew
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching
palm,

A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their
tops

The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung;
Which to our general Sire gave prospect
large

Into his nether empire neighbouring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appeared, with gay enamelled colours
mixed;

On which the sun more glad impressed his
beams

Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth: so
lovely seemed

That lantskip. And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart in-
spires

Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they
stole

Those balmy spoils. As, when to them who
sail

Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are
past

Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and
many a league

Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean
smiles;

So entertained those odorous sweets the
Fiend

Who came their bane, though with them
better pleased

Than Asmodæus with the fishy fume

That drove him, though enamoured, from
the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Ægypt, there fast
bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage
hill

Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none; so thick en-
twined,

As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had per-
plexed

All path of man or beast that passed that
way.

One gate there only was, and that looked
east

On the other side. Which when the Arch-
Felon saw,

Due entrance he disdained, and, in con-
tempt,

At one alight bound high overleaped all
bound

Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
lights on his feet. As when a prowling
wolf,

Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for
prey,

Watching where shepherds pen their flocks
at eve,

In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the
fold;

Or as a thief, bent to unboard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial
doors,

Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no as-
sault,

In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
So clomb this first grand Thief into God's
fold:

So since into his Church lewd hirelings
climb.

Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest there that
grew,

Sat like a Cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue
thought

Of that life-giving plant, but only used
For prospect what, well used, had been the
pledge

Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right

The good before him, but perverts best
things

To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him, with new wonder, now he
views,

To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room Nature's whole wealth; yea,
more! —

A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her
line

From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell,

taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew
fast by —

Knowledge of good, bought dear by know-
ing ill.

Southward through Eden went a river
large,

Nor changed his course, but through the
shaggy hill

Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had
thrown

That mountain, as his garden-mould, high
raised

Upon the rapid current, which, through
veins

Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-
drawn,

Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether
flood,

Which from his darksome passage now ap-
pears,

And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous
realm

And country whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell
How, from that sapphire fount the crisped
brooks,

Rowling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed

Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice
Art

In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and
plain,

Both where the morning sun first warmly
smote

The open field, and where the unpierced
shade

Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was
this place,

A happy rural seat of various view:

Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums
and balm;

Others whose fruit, burnished with golden
rind,

Hung amiable — Hesperian fables true, ²⁵⁰
If true, here only — and of delicious taste.

Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and
flocks

Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap

Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the

rose.

Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine

Lays forth her purple grape, and gently
creeps

Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters
fall ²⁶⁰

Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle

crowned

Her crystal mirror holds, unite their
streams.

The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal
airs,

Breathing the smell of field and grove, at-
tune

The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in

dance,

Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair
field

Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flow-
ers,

Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis ²⁷⁰
Was gathered — which cost Ceres all that

pain

To seek her through the world — nor that
sweet grove

Of Daphne, by Orontes and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise

Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle,

Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan
Jove,

Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's
eye;

Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara (though this by some sup-
posed

True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,

A whole day's journey high, but wide re-
mote

From this Assyrian garden, where the
Fiend

Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and

strange.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
God-like erect, with native honour clad

In naked majesty, seemed lords of all, ²⁸⁰
And worthy seemed; for in their looks di-
vine

The image of their glorious Maker shon,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and

pure —

Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,
Whence true authority in men: though both

Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;
For contemplation he and valour formed,

For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.

His fair large front and eye sublime de-
clared ³⁰⁰

Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung

Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders
broad:

She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadorned golden tresses wore

Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils — which im-
plied

Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received

Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay. ³¹⁰

Nor those mysterious parts were then con-
cealed;

Then was not guilty shame. Diabonest
shame

Of Nature's works, honour dishonourable.
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind

With shews instead, mere shews of seem-
ing pure,

And banished from man's life his happiest
life,

Simplicity and spotless innocence !

So passed they naked on, nor shunned the
sight ³¹⁹

Of God or Angel ; for they thought no
ill :

So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest
pair

That ever since in love's imbraces met —
Adam the goodliest man of men since born

His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green

Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-
side,

They sat them down; and, after no more
toil

Of their sweet gardening labour than suf-
ficed

To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite

More grateful, to their supper-fruits they
fell — ³³¹

Nectarine fruits, which the compliant
boughs

Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with

flowers.

The savoury pulp they chew, and in the
rind,

Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming
stream ;

Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as be seems

Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played

All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of
all chase ³⁴¹

In wood or wilderness, forest or den.

Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid ; bears, tigers, ounces,

pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy ele-
phant,

To make them mirth, used all his might,
and wreathed

His lithe proboscis ; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine

His breasted train, and of his fatal guile ³⁴⁹
Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass

Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gaz-
ing sat,

Or bedward ruminating ; for the sun,
Declined, was hastening now with prone

career

To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending
scale

Of Heaven the stars that usher evening
rose :

When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recover-
ed sad : —

“ O Hell ! what do mine eyes with grief
behold ?

Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould — Earth - born

perhaps, ³⁶⁰
Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright

Little inferior — whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love ; so lively

shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace

The hand that formed them on their shape
hath poured.

Ah ! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these

delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe —

More woe, the more your taste is now of
joy :

Happy, but for so happy ill secured ³⁷⁰
Long to continue, and this high seat, your

Heaven,

Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is entered ; yet no purposed foe

To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I

seek,
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,

That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not

please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense ; yet

such ³⁷⁹

Accept your Maker's work ; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,

To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings ; there will be

room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive

Your numerous offspring ; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me, loath, to this re-
venge

On you, who wrong me not, for him who
wronged.

And, should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just — ³⁸⁹

Honour and empire with revenge enlarged
By conquering this new World — compels

me now

To do what else, though damned, I should
abhor."

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his
end

Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might
learn 400

By word or action marked. About them
round

A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some poulieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close; then rising, changes
oft

His couchant watch, as one who chose his
ground,

Whence rushing he might surest seize them
both

Gripped in each paw; when Adam, first of
men,

To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
Turned him all ear to hear new utterance
flow:—

"Sole partner and sole part of all these
joys, 410

Dearer thyself than all, needs must the
Power

That made us, and for us this ample World,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite;
That raised us from the dust, and placed us
here

In all this happiness, who at this hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need; he who re-
quires

From us no other service than to keep 420
This one, this easy charge — of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;
So near grows Death to Life, whate'er
Death is —

Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well
thou know'st

God hath pronounced it Death to taste that
Tree:

The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferred upon us, and dominion given 430

Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think
hard

One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and
choice

Unlimited of manifold delights;
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task,
To prune these growing plants, and tend
these flowers;

Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were
sweet."

To whom thus Eve replied: — "O thou
for whom 440

And from whom I was formed flesh of thy
flesh,

And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head! what thou hast said is just and
right.

For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,
And daily thanks — I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
That day I oft remember, when from
sleep

I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
Under a shade, on flowers, much wonder-
ing where 451

And what I was, whence thither brought,
and how.

Not distant far from thence a murmuring
sound

Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither
went

With unexperienced thought, and laid me
down

On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another
sky.

As I bent down to look, just opposite 460
A Shape within the watery gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me. I started back,
It started back; but pleased I soon re-
turned,

Pleased it returned as soon with answering
looks

Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain
desire,

Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What
thou seest,

What there thou seest, fair creature, is
thyself;

With thee it came and goes: but follow
me,

And I will bring thee where no shadow
stays ⁴⁷⁰

Thy coming, and thy soft embraces — he
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt en-
joy

Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be
called

Mother of human race.' What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?

Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall,
Under a platan; yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I
turned; ⁴⁸⁰

Thou, following, criest aloud, 'Return,
fair Eve;

Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of
him thou art,

His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I
lent

Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear:

Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.' With that thy gentle hand
Seized mine: I yielded, and from that time
see

How beauty is excelled by manly grace ⁴⁹⁰
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general mother, and, with
eyes

Of conjugal attraction unreprieved,
And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles when he impregns the
clouds ⁵⁰⁰

That shed May flowers, and pressed her
matron lip

With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus
plained: —

"Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus
these two,

Imparadised in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill

Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am
thrust,

Where neither joy nor love, but fierce de-
sire, ⁵⁰⁹

Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines!
Yet let me not forget what I have gained
From their own mouths. All is not theirs,
it seems;

One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge
called,

Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge for-
bidden?

Suspicious, reasonless! Why should their
Lord

Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
Can it be death? And do they only stand
By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their
faith? ⁵²⁰

O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! Hence I will excite their
minds

With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low, whom knowledge might
exalt

Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,
They taste and die: what likelier can en-
sue?

But first with narrow search I must walk
round

This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may
meet ⁵³⁰

Some wandering Spirit of Heaven, by foun-
tain-side,

Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learned. Live
while ye may,

Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures; for long woes are to suc-
ceed!"

So saying, his proud step he scornful
turned,

But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill,
o'er dale, his roam.

Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where
Heaven

With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting
Sun ⁵⁴⁰

Slowly descended, and with right aspect
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Levelled his evening rays. It was a rock

Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
 Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
 Accessible from Earth, one entrance high;
 The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
 Still as it rose, impossible to climb.

Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
 Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting
 night; 550

About him exercised heroic games
 The unarmed youth of Heaven; but nigh
 at hand

Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and
 spears,

Hung high, with diamond flaming and with
 gold.

Thither came Uriel, gliding through the
 even

On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
 In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours
 fired

Impress the air, and shews the mariner
 From what point of his compass to beware
 Impetuous winds. He thus began in
 haste: — 560

“Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath
 given

Charge and strict watch that to this happy
 place

No evil thing approach or enter in.

This day at highth of noon came to my
 sphere

A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
 More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly
 Man,

God's latest image. I described his way
 Bent all on speed, and marked his aerie
 gait,

But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
 Where he first lighted, soon discerned his
 looks 570

Alien from Heaven, with passions foul ob-
 scured.

Mine eye pursued him still, but under
 shade

Lost sight of him. One of the banished
 crew,

I fear, hath ventured from the Deep, to
 raise

New troubles; him thy care must be to
 find.”

To whom the wingèd Warrior thus re-
 turned: —

“Uriel, no wonder if thy perfer sight,
 Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou
 sitt'st,

See far and wide. In at this gate none
 pass

The vigilance here placed, but such as
 come 580

Well known from Heaven; and since me-
 ridian hour

No creature thence. If Spirit of other
 sort,

So minded, have o'erleaped these earthy
 bounds

On purpose, hard thou know'st it to ex-
 clude

Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.

But, if within the circuit of these walks,

In whatsoever shape, he lurk of whom
 Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall
 know.”

So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
 Returned on that bright beam, whose point
 now raised 590

Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now
 fallen

Beneath the Azores; whether the Prime
 Orb,

Incredible how swift, had thither rowled

Diurnal, or this less volúbil Earth,

By shorter flight to the east, had left him
 there

Arraying with reflected purple and gold

The clouds that on his western throne at-
 tend.

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight
 gray

Had in her sober livery all things clad;

Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,

They to their grassy couch, these to their
 nests 600

Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightin-
 gule.

She all night long her amorous descant
 sung:

Silence was pleased. Now glowed the fir-
 mament

With living Saphirs; Hesperus, that led

The starry host, rode brightest, till the
 Moon,

Rising in clouded majesty, at length

Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless
 light,

And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw;

When Adam thus to Eve: — “Fair consort,
 the hour 610

Of night, and all things now retired to
 rest,

Mind us of like repose; since God hath set

Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
 Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,
 Now falling with soft slumberous weight,
 inclines

Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long
 Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest;
 Man hath his daily work of body or mind
 Appointed, which declares his dignity,
 And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
 While other animals unactive range, ⁶²¹
 And of their doings God takes no account.
 To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the
 east

With first approach of light, we must be
 risen,

And at our pleasant labour, to reform
 Yon flowery arbores, yonder alleys green,
 Our walk at noon, with branches over-
 grown,

That mock our scant manuring, and re-
 quire

More hands than ours to lop their wanton
 growth.

Those blossoms also, and those dropping
 guins, ⁶³⁰

That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,
 Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with
 ease.

Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us
 rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty
 adorned: —

"My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
 Unargued I obey. So God ordains:

God is thy law, thou mine: to know no
 more

Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her
 praise.

With thee conversing, I forget all time,
 All seasons, and their change; all please
 alike. ⁶⁴⁰

Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising
 sweet,

With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the
 Sun,

When first on this delightful land he
 spreads

His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and
 flower,

Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertile
 Earth

After soft showers; and sweet the coming-
 on

Of grateful Evening mild; then silent
 Night,

With this her solemn bird, and this fair
 Moon,

And these the gems of Heaven, her starry
 train:

But neither breath of Morn, when she
 ascends ⁶⁵⁰

With charm of earliest birds; nor rising
 Sun

On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit,
 flower,

Glistening with dew; nor fragrance after
 showers;

Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent
 Night,

With this her solemn bird; nor walk by
 moon,

Or glittering star-light, without thee is
 sweet.

But wherefore all night long shine these?
 for whom

This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut
 all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor replied: —
 "Daughter of God and Man, accomplished

Eve, ⁶⁶⁰

Those have their course to finish round the
 Earth

By morrow evening, and from land to land
 In order, though to nations yet unborn,
 Ministering light prepared, they set and
 rise;

Lest total Darkness should by night regain
 Her old possession, and extinguish life

In nature and all things; which these soft
 fires

Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
 Of various influence foment and warm, ⁶⁶⁹

Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
 Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow

On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
 Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.

These, then, though unbeheld in deep of
 night,

Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men
 were none,

That Heaven would want spectators, God
 want praise.

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the
 Earth

Unseen, both when we wake, and when we
 sleep:

All these with ceaseless praise his works
 behold

Both day and night. How often, from the
 steep ⁶⁸⁰

Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly round-
ing walk,

With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to
Heaven."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they
passed 689
On to their blissful bower. It was a place
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he
framed
All things to Man's delightful use. The
roof

Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beaute-
ous flower,

Iris all hues, roses, and gessamin,
Reared high their flourished heads be-
tween, and wrought

Mosaic; under foot the violet, 700
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broidered the ground, more coloured than
with stone

Of costliest emblem. Other creature here,
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter
none;

Such was their awe of Man. In shadier
bower

More sacred and sequestered, though but
feigned,

Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close re-
cess,

With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling
hearbs,

Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial
bed, 710

And heavenly choirs the hymenean sung,
What day the genial Angel to our Sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too
like

In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she en-
snared

Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both
stood, 720

Both turned, and under open sky adored
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth,
and Heaven,

Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent
globe,

And starry Pole: — "Thou also madest the
Night,

Maker Omnipotent; and thou the Day,
Which we, in our appointed work employed,
Have finished, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,
For us too large, where thy abundance
wants 730

Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of
sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure,
Which God likes best, into their inmost
bower

Handed they went; and, eased the putting-
off

These troublesome disguises which we
wear, 740

Straight side by side were laid; nor turned,
I ween,

Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the
rites

Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austere talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free
to all.

Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and Man?

Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true
source 750

Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!

By thee adulterous lust was driven from
men

Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were
known.

Far be it that I should write thee sin or
blame,

Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets, 760
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,

Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.

Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights

His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,

Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile

Of harlots — loveless, joyless, unindeared,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,

Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight bal,

Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. 770

These, lulled by nightingales, imbracing slept,

And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Showered roses, which the morn repaired.

Sleep on,
Blest pair! and, O! yet happiest, if ye seek

No happier state, and know to know no more!

Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone

Half-way up-hill this vast sublunar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim

Forth issuing, at the accustomed hour, stood armed

To their night-watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus

spoke: — 781

“Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south

With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:

Our circuit meets full west.” As flame they part,

Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.

From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called

That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge: —

“Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed

Search through this Garden; leave unsearched no nook;

But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge, 790

Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.

This evening from the Sun's decline arrived
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?), escaped

The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt:
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.”

So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct

In search of whom they sought. Him there they found

Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying by his devilish art to reach 801

The organs of her fancy, and with them forge

Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint

The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise

Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise,

At least dis tempered, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,

Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride.

Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear 810

Touched lightly; for no falsehood can endure

Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,

Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark

Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun, some magazin to store

Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the

air; 820

So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.
Back slept those two fair Angels, half

amazed 830

So sudden to behold the griesly King;
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him

soon: —

“Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell

Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,

Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that

sleep?”

“Know ye not, then,” said Satan, filled with scorn,

“Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate

For you, there sitting where ye durst not
soar!

Not to know me argues yourselves un-
known, 830

The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in
vain?"

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn
with scorn:—

"Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the
same,

Or undiminished brightness, to be known
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright
and pure.

That glory then, when thou no more wast
good,

Departed from thee; and thou resembl'st
now

Thy sin and place of doom obscure and
foul. 840

But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give ac-
count

To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm."

So spake the Cherub; and his grave re-
buke,

Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,

And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in his shape how lovely—saw, and
pined

His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed

Undaunted. "If I must contend," said
he, 851

"Best with the best—the sender, not the
sent;

Or all at once: more glory will be won,
Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon

bold,

"Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence
weak."

The Fiend replied not, overcome with
rage;

But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty
on,

Champing his iron curb. To strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had
quelled 860

His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew
they nigh

The western point, where those half-round-
ing guards

Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron
joined,

Awaiting next command. To whom their
chief,

Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud:—
"O friends, I hear the tread of nimble
feet

Hasting this way, and now by glimpse dis-
cern

Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
And with them comes a third, of regal
port,

But faded splendour wan, who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of
Hell— 871

Not likely to part hence without contest'.
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours."

He scarce had ended, when those two
approached,

And brief related whom they brought,
where found,

How busied, in what form and posture
couched.

To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel
spoke:—

"Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds
prescribed

To thy transgressions, and disturbed the
charge 879

Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example, but have power and right

To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and
those

Whose dwelling God hath planted here in
bliss?"

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous
brow:—

"Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem
of wise;

And such I held thee; but this question
asked

Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves
his pain?

Who would not, finding way, break loose
from Hell,

Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst
thyself, no doubt, 890

And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou might'st
hope to change

Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight; which in this place I
sought:

To thee no reason, who know'st only good,

But evil hast not tried. And wilt object
His will who bound us? Let him surer
bar

His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance. Thus much what was
asked:

The rest is true; they found me where they
say;

But that implies not violence or harm."

Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel
moved,

Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:—

"O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,
Since Satana fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not who ask what boldness brought him
hither

Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell pre-
scribed!

So wise he judges it to fly from pain

However, and to scape his punishment!
So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the
wrauth,

Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy
flight

Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back
to Hell,

Which taught thee yet no better than no
pain

Can equal anger infinite provoked.
But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with
thee

Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to
them

Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than
they

Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief,
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou al-
leged

To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

To which the Fiend thus answered, frown-
ing stern:—

"Not that I less endure, or shrink from
pain,

Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid

The blasting volleyed thunder made all
speed

And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before,

Argue thy inexperience what behoves,
From hard assays and ill successes past,

A faithful leader — not to hazard all

Through ways of danger by himself un-
tried.

I, therefore, I alone, first undertook
To wing the desolate Abyss, and spy

This new-created World, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find

Better abode, and my afflicted Powers
To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air;

Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against;

Whose easier business were to serve their
Lord

High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his
throne,

And practised distances to cringe, not
fight."

To whom the Warrior-Angel soon re-
plied:—

"To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,

Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
Satan; and couldst thou 'faithful' add?

O name,

O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?

Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!
Was this your discipline and faith ingaged,

Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Su-
preme?

And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst
seem

Patron of liberty, who more than thou
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely
adored

Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but
in hope

To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I aared thee now: Avaunt!

Fly thither whence thou fledd'st. If from
this hour

Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee
chained,

And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."

So threatened he; but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage, re-
plied:—

"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of
chains,

Proud liminary Cherub! but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel

From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's
King

Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy Com-
peers,
Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant
wheels

In progress through the road of Heaven
star-paved."

While thus he spake, the angelic squad-
ron bright

Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd
horns

Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears; as thick as when a
field 980

Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears which way the
wind

Sways them; the careful ploughman doubt-
ing stands

Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful
sheaves

Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan,
alarmed,

Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:

His stature reached the sky, and on his
crest

Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his
grasp

What seemed both spear and shield. Now
dreadful deeds 990

Might have ensued; nor only Paradise,
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the Elements
At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and
torn

With violence of this conflict, had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales,
yet seen

Betwixt Astræa and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weighed,
The pendulous round Earth with balanced
air 1000

In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and realms. In these he put two
weights,

The sequel each of parting and of fight:
The latter quick up flew, and kicked the
beam;

Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the
Fiend:—

"Satan, I know thy strength, and thou
know'st mine,

Neither our own, but given; what folly
then

To boast what arms can do! since thine no
more

Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though
doubled now

To trample thee as mire. For proof look
up, 1010

And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,
Where thou art weighed, and shown how
light, how weak

If thou resist." The Fiend looked up, and
knew

His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but
fled

Murmuring; and with him fled the shades
of Night.

BOOK VII

[Lines 1-39. INVOCATION TO URANIA]

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania, by that
name

If rightly thou art called, whose voice di-
vine

Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!

The meaning, not the name, I call; for
thou

Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-
born,

Before the hills appeared or fountain
flowed,

Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst
play 10

In presence of the Almighty Father,
pleased

With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have pre-
sumed,

An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air.
Thy tempering. With like safety guided
down,

Return me to my native element;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as
once

Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn. 20

Half yet remains unsung, but narrower
 bound
 Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
 Standing on Earth, not rapt above the
 pole,
 More safe I sing with mortal voice, un-
 changed
 To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil
 days,
 On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
 In darkness, and with dangers compassed
 round,
 And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when
 Morn

Purples the East. Still govern thou my
 song,
 Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian
 Bard
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
 To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
 Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse
 defend
 Her son. So fail not thou who thee im-
 plores;
 For thou art heavenly, she an empty
 dream.

BOOK IX

[Lines 1-47]

No more of talk where God or Angel
 Guest
 With Man, as with his friend, familiar
 used
 To sit indulgent, and with him partake
 Rural repast, permitting him the while
 Venial discourse unblamed. I now must
 change
 Those notes to tragic—foul distrust, and
 breach
 Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
 And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
 Now alienated, distance and distaste,
 Anger and just rebuke, and judgment
 given,
 That brought into this World a world of
 woe,
 Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
 Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argu-
 ment
 Not less but more heroic than the wrath
 Of stern Achilles on his foe.pursued
 Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
 Of Turnus for Lavinia dispossessed;
 Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
 Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:
 If answerable style I can obtain

Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
 Her nightly visitation unimplored,
 And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
 Easy my unpremeditated verse,
 Since first this subject for heroic song
 Pleased me, long choosing and beginning
 late,
 Not sedulous by nature to indite
 Wars, hitherto the only argument
 Heroic deemed, chief maistrise to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc fabled
 knights
 In battles feigned (the better fortitude
 Of patience and heroic martyrdom
 Unsung), or to describe races and games,
 Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
 Impreses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
 At joust and tournament; then marshalled
 feast
 Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:
 The skill of artifice or office mean;
 Not that which justly gives heroic name
 To person or to poem! Me, of these
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold
 Climat, or years, damp my intended wing
 Depressed; and much they may if all be
 mine,
 Not Hers who brings it nightly to my ear.

JOHN DRYDEN

MAC FLECKNOE

OR, A SATIRE UPON THE TRUE-BLUE-
PROTESTANT POET

T. S.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ABSALOM AND
ACHITOPHEL

[Publ. 1682.]

[Thomas Shadwell, once Dryden's friend, now his enemy, and an ardent Whig, had published an answer to *The Medal*, entitled, *The Medal of John Bayes, a Satire against Folly and Knavery*, in which he assailed Dryden with foul and scurrilous abuse. Dryden's reply was the following poem, published, according to Malone (I, i, 169), who probably had some authority for his statement, on October 4, 1682.]

ALL human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must
obey.

This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus,
young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd
long;

In prose and verse, was own'd, without dis-
pute,

Thro' all the realms of *Nonsense*, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length de-
bate

To settle the succession of the State; 10
And, pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried: " 'Tis resolv'd; for nature pleads,
that he

Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Sh—— alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Sh—— alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pre-
tense,

But Sh—— never deviates into sense. 20

Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike thro', and make a lucid interval;
But Sh——'s genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade
the plain,

And, spread in solemn state, sopinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of
thee,

Thou last great prophet of tautology. 30
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich druggot,
came

To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy
way,

With well-tim'd oars before the royal
barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial
charge; 40

And big with hymn, commander of a host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy
nail.

At thy well-sharpen'd thumb from shore
to shore

The treble squeaks for fear, the basses
roar;

Echoes from Pissing Alley Sh—— call,
And Sh—— they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng.
As at the morning toast that floats along. 50
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious
band,

Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing
hand.

St. André's feet ne'er kept more equal
time,

Not ev'n the feet of thy own *Psyché's*
rhyme;

Tho' they in number as in sense excel:
 So just, so like tautology, they fell,
 That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore
 The lute and sword, which he in triumph
 bore,
 And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius
 more." }
 Here stopp'd the good old sire, and wept
 for joy 60
 In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
 All arguments, but most his plays, per-
 suade,

That for anointed dulness he was made.
 Close to the walls which fair Augusta
 bind,
 (The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd,)
 An ancient fabric rais'd t' inform the sight,
 There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
 A watchtower once; but now, so fate or-
 dains,

Of all the pile an empty name remains.
 From its old ruins brothel-houses rise, 70
 Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,
 Where their vast courts the mother-strum-
 pets keep,
 And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep.
 Near these a Nursery erects its head,
 Where queens are form'd, and future heroes
 bred;

Where unflieg'd actors learn to laugh and
 cry,
 Where infant punks their tender voices
 try,

And little Maximins the gods defy. }
 Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
 Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear; 80
 But gentle Simkin just reception finds
 Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds:
 Pure clinches the suburban Muse affords,
 And Panton waging harmless war with
 words.

Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well
 known,

Ambitiously design'd his Sh——'s throne;
 For ancient Dekker prophesied long since,
 That in this pile should reign a mighty
 prince,

Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense; }
 To whom true dulness should some *Psyches*
 owe, 90

But worlds of *Misers* from his pen should
 flow;

Humorists and hypocrites it should produce,
 Whole Raymond families, and tribes of
 Bruce.

Now Empress Fame had publish'd the
 renown

Of Sh——'s coronation thro' the town.
 Rous'd by report of Fame, the nations meet,
 From near Bunhill, and distant Watling
 Street.

No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
 But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay;
 From dusty shops neglected authors come,
 Martyrs of pies, and relics of the bun. 101
 Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,
 But loads of Sh—— almost choke'd the way.
 Bilk'd stationers for yeomen stood prepar'd,
 And Herringman was captain of the guard.
 The hoary prince in majesty appear'd,
 High on a throne of his own labors rear'd.
 At his right hand our young Ascanius sat,
 Rome's other hope, and pillar of the State
 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories,
 grace, 110

And lambent dulness play'd around his face.
 As Hannibal did to the altars come,
 Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
 So Sh—— swore, nor should his vow be
 vain,

That he till death true dulness would main-
 tain;

And, in his father's right, and realm's de-
 fense,

Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with
 sense.

The king himself the sacred unction made,
 As king by office, and as priest by trade.
 In his sinister hand, instead of ball, 120
 He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's Kingdom to his right he did convey,
 At once his scepter, and his rule of sway;
 Whose righteous lore the prince had prac-
 tic'd young,

And from whose loins recorded *Psyches*
 sprung.

His temples, last, with poppies were o'er-
 spread,

That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head.
 Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
 On his left hand twelve reverend owls did
 fly.

So *Romulus*, 't is sung, by Tiber's brook, 130
 Presage of sway from twice six vultures
 took.

Th' admiring through loud acclamations
 make,

And omens of his future empire take.
 The sire then shook the honors of his head,
 And from his brows damps of oblivion shed

Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:

"Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign

To far Barbadoes on the western main; 140
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen!"

He paus'd, and all the people cried, "Amen."
Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos* in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage, 151

Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,
And in their folly shew the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defense,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own. 160
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name.
But let no alien S—d—y interpose,
To lard with wit thy hungry *Epsom* prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou
wouldst cull,

Trust nature, do not labor to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and, in each line,

Sir Formal's oratory will be thine:
Sir Formal, tho' unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill. 170
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,

By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,

And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:

What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein,

Or swept the dust in *Psyche's* humble strain?

Where sold he bargains, 'whip-stitch, kiss my arse,' 181

Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,

As thou whole Eth'rege dost transfuse to thine?

But so transfus'd, as oil on water's flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,

New humors to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dulness, 't is inclin'd;

Which makes thy writings lean on one side still, 191

And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.

Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretense
Of likeness; thine 's a tympany of sense.

A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou 'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;

Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.

With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,

Thy inoffensive satires never bite. 200

In thy felonious heart tho' venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram.

Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command

Some peaceful province in acrostic land.

There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,

And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.

Or, if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."

He said: but his last words were scarcely heard; 211

For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepar'd,

And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.

Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,

Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.

The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,

With double portion of his father's art.

RELIGIO LAICI

OR, A LAYMAN'S FAITH

A POEM

[Publ. 1682.]

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri

THE PREFACE

A POEM with so bold a title, and a name prefix'd from which the handling of so serious a subject would not be expected, may reasonably oblige the author to say somewhat in defense both of himself and of his undertaking. In the first place, if it be objected to me that, being a layman, I ought not to have concern'd myself with speculations which belong to the profession of divinity, I could answer that perhaps laymen, with equal advantages of parts and knowledge, are not the most incompetent judges of sacred things; but, in the due sense of my own weakness and want of learning, I plead not this; I pretend not to make myself a judge of faith in others, but only to make a confession of my own; I lay no unhallowed hand upon the ark, but wait on it, with the reverence that becomes me, at a distance. In the next place I will ingenuously confess that the helps I have us'd in this small treatise were many of them taken from the works of our own reverend divines of the Church of England; so that the weapons with which I combat irreligion are already consecrated; tho' I suppose they may be taken down as lawfully as the sword of Goliath was by David, when they are to be employ'd for the common cause, against the enemies of piety. I intend not by this to intitle them to any of my errors, which yet, I hope, are only those of charity to mankind; and such as my own charity has caus'd me to commit, that of *others* may more easily excuse. Being naturally inclin'd to scepticism in philosophy, I have no reason to impose my opinions in a subject which is above it; but whatever they are, I submit them with all reverence to my Mother Church, accounting them no further mine, than as they are authoriz'd, or at least uncondemn'd by her. And, indeed, to secure myself on this side, I have us'd the necessary precaution of showing this paper before it was publish'd to a judicious and learned friend, a man indefatigably zealous in the service of the Church and State; and whose writings have highly deserv'd of both. He was pleas'd to approve the body of the discourse, and I hope he is more my friend than to do it out of complaisance. 'Tis true, he had too good a taste to like it all; and amongst some other faults recommended to my second view what I have written, perhaps too boldly, on St. Athanasius, which he advis'd me wholly to omit. I am sensible enough that I had done more pro-

dently to have follow'd his opinion; but then I could not have satisfied myself that I had done honestly not to have written what was my own. It has always been my *thought* that heathens who never did, nor without miracle could, hear of the name of Christ, were yet in a possibility of salvation. Neither will it enter easily into my belief that, before the coming of our Savior, the whole world, excepting only the Jewish nation, should lie under the inevitable necessity of everlasting punishment, for want of that revelation which was confin'd to so small a spot of ground as that of Palestine. Among the sons of Noah we read of one only who was accurst; and if a blessing in the ripeness of time was reserv'd for Japhet, (of whose progeny we are,) it seems unaccountable to me why so many generations of the same offspring, as preceded our Savior in the flesh, should be all involv'd in one common condemnation, and yet that their posterity should be intitled to the hopes of salvation; as if a bill of exclusion had pass'd only on the fathers, which debarr'd not the sons from their succession. Or that so many ages had been *deliver'd over* to hell, and so many *reserv'd* for heaven, and that the Devil had the first choice, and God the next. Truly I am apt to think that the reveal'd religion which was taught by Noah to all his sons might continue for some ages in the whole posterity. That afterwards it was included wholly in the family of Sem is manifest; but when the progenies of Cham and Japhet swarm'd into colonies, and those colonies were subdivided into many others, in process of time their descendants lost by little and little the primitive and purer rites of divine worship, retaining only the notion of one deity; to which succeeding generations added others; for men took their degrees in those ages from conquerors to gods. Revelation being thus eclips'd to almost all mankind, the light of nature, as the next in dignity, was substituted; and that is it which St. Paul concludes to be the rule of the heathens, and by which they are hereafter to be judg'd. If my supposition be true, then the consequence which I have assum'd in my poem may be also true; namely, that Deism, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of reveal'd religion in the posterity of Noah: and that our modern philosophers, nay, and some of our philosophizing divines, have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintain'd that by their force mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme agent or intellectual being which we call God; that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deductions, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse; I mean as simply consider'd, and without the benefit of divine illumination. So that we have not lifted up ourselves to God by the weak pinions of our reason, but he has been pleas'd to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato writ, and the rest of

the heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of *motion*, our reason can apprehend, tho' it cannot discover what it is, by its own virtue. And indeed 't is very improbable that we, who by the strength of our faculties cannot enter into the knowledge of any *being*, not so much as of our *own*, should be able to find out by them that supreme nature, which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason do but weaken the cause which they endeavor to support: 't is to take away the pillars from our faith, and to prop it only with a twig; 'tis to design a tower like that of Babel, which, if it were possible (as it is not) to reach heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen. For every man is building a several way; impotently conceited of his own model and his own materials: reason is always striving, and always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while 't is exercis'd about that which is not its proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own methods; at least, so much of him as he is pleas'd to reveal to us in the sacred Scriptures; to apprehend them to be the word of God is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of heaven impress'd upon our human understanding.

And now for what concerns the holy bishop Athanasius, the preface of whose creed seems inconsistent with my opinion; which is, that heathens may possibly be sav'd: in the first place I desire it may be consider'd that it is the preface only, not the creed itself, which (till I am better inform'd) is of too hard a digestion for my obarity. 'Tis not that I am ignorant how many several texts of Scripture seemingly support that cause; but neither am I ignorant how all those texts may receive a kinder and more mollified interpretation. Every man who is read in Church history knows that belief was drawn up after a long contestation with Arius concerning the divinity of our blessed Savior, and his being one substance with the Father; and that, thus compil'd, it was sent abroad among the Christian churches, as a kind of test, which whosoever took was look'd on as an orthodox believer. 'Tis manifest from hence that the heathen part of the empire was not concern'd in it; for its business was not to distinguish betwixt pagans and Christians, but betwixt heretics and true believers. This, well consider'd, takes off the heavy weight of censure, which I would willingly avoid from so venerable a man; for if this proportion, 'whosoever will be sav'd,' be restrain'd only to those to whom it was intended, and for whom it was compos'd, I mean the Christians; then the anathema reaches not the heathens, who had never heard of Christ, and were nothing interest'd in that dispute.

After all, I am far from blaming even that prefatory addition to the creed, and as far from caviling at the continuation of it in the liturgy of the Church, where, on the days appointed, 't is publicly read: for I suppose there is the same reason for it now, in opposition to the Socinians, as there was then against the Arians; the one being a heresy which seems to have been refin'd out of the other; and with how much more plausibility of reason it combats our religion, with so much more caution to be avoided; and therefore the prudence of our Church is to be commended, which has interpos'd her authority for the recommendation of this creed. Yet, to such as are grounded in the true belief, those explanatory creeds, the Nicene and this of Athanasius, might perhaps be spar'd; for what is supernatural will always be a mystery in spite of exposition, and, for my own part, the plain Apostles' Creed is most suitable to my weak understanding, as the simplest diet is the most easy of digestion.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than I intended, and longer than, perhaps, I ought; for having laid down, as my foundation, that the Scripture is a rule; that in all things needful to salvation it is clear, sufficient, and ordain'd by God Almighty for that purpose, I have left myself no right to interpret obscure places, such as concern the possibility of eternal happiness to heathens; because whatsoever is obscure is concluded not necessary to be known.

But, by asserting the Scripture to be the canon of our faith, I have unavoidably created to myself two sorts of enemies: the Papists indeed, more directly, because they have kept the Scripture from us, what they could; and have reserv'd to themselves a right of interpreting what they have deliver'd under the pretense of infallibility; and the Fanatics more collaterally, because they have assum'd what amounts to an infallibility in the private spirit; and have detorted those texts of Scripture which are not necessary to salvation, to the damnable uses of sedition, disturbance, and destruction of the civil government. To begin with the Papists, and to speak freely, I think them the less dangerous, at least in appearance, to our present State, for not only the penal laws are in force against them, and their number is contemptible; but also their peirage and commons are excluded from parliaments, and consequently those laws in no probability of being repeal'd. A general and uninterrupted plot of their clergy, ever since the Reformation, I suppose all Protestants believe. For 't is not reasonable to think but that so many of their orders, as were outed from their fat possessions, would endeavor a reëtrance against those whom they account heretics. As for the late design, Mr. Coleman's letters, for aught I know, are the best evidence; and what they discover, without wiredrawing their sense, or malicious glosses, all men of reason conclude credible. If there be anything more than this requir'd of me, I must believe it as well as I am able, in spite of the witnesses, and out of a decent conformity

to the votes of parliament; for I suppose the Fanatics will not allow the private spirit in this case. Here the infallibility is at least in one part of the government; and our understandings as well as our wills are represented. But to return to the Roman Catholics, how can we be secure from the practice of Jesuited Papists in that religion? For not two or three of that order, as some of them would impose upon us, but almost the whole body of them, are of opinion that their infallible master has a right over kings, not only in spirituals but temporal. Not to name Mariana, Bellarmine, Emanuel Sa, Molina, Santarel, Simancha, and at least twenty others of foreign countries; we can produce, of our own nation, Campian, and Doleman or Parsons, besides many are nam'd whom I have not read, who all of them attest this doctrine, that the Pope can depose and give away the right of any sovereign prince, *si vel paulum deflexerit*, if he shall never so little warp; but if he once comes to be excommunicated, then the bond of obedience is taken off from subjects; and they may and ought to drive him, like another Nebuchadnezzar, *ex hominibus Christianorum dominatis*, from exercising dominion over Christians; and to this they are bound by virtue of divine precept, and by all the ties of conscience under no less penalty than damnation. If they answer me (as a learned priest has lately written) that this doctrine of the Jesuits is not *de fide*; and that consequently they are not oblig'd by it, they must pardon me if I think they have said nothing to the purpose; for 'tis a maxim in their Church, where points of faith are not decided, and that doctors are of contrary opinions, they may follow which part they please; but more safely the most receiv'd and most authoriz'd. And their champion Bellarmine has told the world, in his *Apology*, that the king of England is a vassal to the Pope, *ratione directi domini*, and that he holds in villanage of his Roman landlord. Which is no new claim put in for England. Our chronicles are his authentic witnesses that King John was depos'd by the same plea, and Philip Augustus admitted tenant. And which makes the more for Bellarmine, the French king was again ejected when our king submitted to the Church, and the crown receiv'd under the sordid condition of a vassalage.

'Tis not sufficient for the more moderate and well-meaning Papists (of which I doubt not there are many) to produce the evidences of their loyalty to the late king, and to declare their innocency in this Plot: I will grant their behavior in the first to have been as loyal and as brave as they desire; and will be willing to hold them excus'd as to the second, (I mean when it comes to my turn, and after my better; for 'tis a madness to be sober alone, while the nation continues drunk;) but that saying of their Father Cres. is still running in my head, that they may be dispens'd with in their obedience to an heretic prince, while the necessity of the times shall oblige them to it: for that (as another of them tells us) is only the effect

of Christian prudence; but when once they shall get power to shake him off, an heretic is no lawful king, and consequently to rise against him is no rebellion. I should be glad, therefore, that they would follow the advice which was charitably given them by a reverend prelate of our Church; namely, that they would join in a public act of disowning and detesting those Jesuited principles; and subscribe to all doctrines which deny the Pope's authority of deposing kings, and releasing subjects from their oath of allegiance: to which I should think they might easily be induc'd, if it be true that this present Pope has condemn'd the doctrine of king-killing, (a thesis of the Jesuits,) amongst others, *ex cathedra*, (as they call it,) or in open consistory.

Leaving them, therefore, in so fair a way (if they please themselves) of satisfying all reasonable men of their sincerity and good meaning to the government, I shall make bold to consider that other extreme of our religion, I mean the Fanatics, or Schismatics, of the English Church. Since the Bible has been translated into our tongue, they have us'd it so, as if their business was not to be sav'd but to be damn'd by its contents. If we consider only them, better had it been for the English nation that it had still remain'd in the original Greek and Hebrew, or at least in the honest Latin of St. Jerome, than that several texts in it should have been perverted to the destruction of that government which put it into so ungrateful hands.

How many heresies the first translation of Tyndal produc'd in few years, let my Lord Herbert's history of Henry the Eighth inform you; insomuch that for the gross errors in it, and the great mischiefs it occasion'd, a sentence pass'd on the first edition of the Bible, too shameful almost to be repeated. After the short reign of Edward the Sixth, (who had continued to carry on the Reformation on other principles than it was begun,) everyone knows that not only the chief promoters of that work, but many others whose consciences would not dispense with Popery, were forc'd, for fear of persecution, to change climates: from whence returning at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, many of them who had been in France, and at Geneva, brought back the rigid opinions and imperious discipline of Calvin, to graff upon our Reformation. Which, tho' they cunningly conceal'd at first, (as well knowing how nauseously that drug would go down in a lawful monarchy, which was prescrib'd for a rebellious commonwealth,) yet they always kept it in reserve; and were never wanting to themselves either in court or parliament, when either they had any prospect of a numerous party of Fanatic members in the one, or the encouragement of any favorite in the other, whose covetousness was gaping at the patrimony of the Church. They who will consult the works of our venerable Hooker, or the account of his life, or more particularly the letter written to him on this subject by George Craumer, may

see by what gradations they proceeded: from the dislike of cap and surplice, the very next step was admonitions to the parliament against the whole government ecclesiastical; then came out volumes in English and Latin in defense of their tenets; and immediately practices were set on foot to erect their discipline without authority. Those not succeeding, satire and railing was the next; and Martin Mar-prelate (the Marvell of those times) was the first Presbyterian scribbler who sanctified libels and scurrility to the use of the Good Old Cause. Which was done (says my author) upon this account; that their serious treatises having been fully answer'd and refuted) they might compass by railing what they had lost by reasoning; and, when their cause was sunk in court and parliament, they might at least hedge in a stake amongst the rabble: for to their ignorance all things are wit which are abusive. But if Church and State were made the theme, then the doctoral degree of wit was to be taken at Billingsgate: even the most saintlike of the party, tho' they durst not excuse this contempt and vilifying of the government, yet were pleas'd, and grinn'd at it with a pious smile, and call'd it a judgment of God against the hierarchy. Thus Sectaries, we may see, were born with teeth, foul-mouth'd and scurrilous from their infancy; and if spiritual pride, venom, violence, contempt of superiors, and slander, had been the marks of orthodox belief, the Presbytery and the rest of our Schismatics, which are their spawn, were always the most visible Church in the Christian world.

'Tis true, the government was too strong at that time for a rebellion; but to shew what proficiency they had made in Calvin's school, even *then* their mouths water'd at it; for two of their gifted brotherhood, (Hacket and Copinger,) as the story tells us, got up into a pease-cart and harangued the people, to dispose them to an insurrection, and to establish their discipline by force: so that, however it comes about that now they celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birthnight as that of their saint and patroness, yet then they were for doing the work of the Lord by arms against her; and, in all probability, they wanted but a Fanatic lord mayor and two sheriffs of their party, to have compass'd it.

Our venerable Hooker, after many admonitions which he had given them, toward the end of his preface breaks out into this prophetic speech: "There is in every one of these considerations most just cause to fear, lest our hastiness to embrace a thing of so perilous consequence" (meaning the Presbyterian discipline) "should cause posterity to feel those evils, which as yet are more easy for us to prevent, than they would be for them to remedy."

How fatally this Cassandra has foretold, we know too well by sad experience: the seeds were sown in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the bloody harvest ripen'd in the reign of King Charles the Martyr; and, because all the sheaves could not be carried off without shed-

ding some of the loose grains, another crop is too like to follow; nay, I fear 't is unavoidable if the conventiellers be permitted still to scatter.

A man may be suffer'd to quote an adversary to our religion, when he speaks truth; and 't is the observation of Maimbourg, in his *History of Calvinism*, that wherever that discipline was planted and embrac'd, rebellion, civil war, and misery attended it. And how indeed should it happen otherwise? Reformation of Church and State has always been the ground of our divisions in England. While we were Papists, our Holy Father rid us, by pretending authority out of the Scriptures to depose princes; when we shook off his authority, the Sectaries furnish'd themselves with the same weapons; and out of the same magazine, the Bible: so that the Scriptures, which are in themselves the greatest security of governors, as commanding express obedience to them, are now turn'd to their destruction; and never since the Reformation has there wanted a text of their interpreting to authorize a rebel. And 't is to be noted by the way that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing, which have been taken up only by the worst party of the Papists, the most frontless flatterers of the Pope's authority, have been espous'd, defended, and are still maintain'd by the whole body of Nonconformists and Republicans. 'Tis but dubbing themselves the people of God, which 't is the interest of their preachers to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe; and after that, they cannot dip into the Bible, but one text or another will turn up for their purpose; if they are under persecution, (as they call it,) then that is a mark of their election; if they flourish, then God works miracles for their deliverance, and the saints are to possess the earth.

They may think themselves to be too roughly handled in this paper; but I, who know how far I could have gone on this subject, must be bold to tell them they are spar'd: tho' at the same time I am not ignorant that they interpret the mildness of a writer to them, as they do the mercy of the government; in the one they think it fear, and conclude it weakness in the other. The best way for them to confute me is, as I before advi'd the Papists, to disclaim their principles and renounce their practices. We shall all be glad to think them true Englishmen when they obey the king, and true Protestants when they conform to the Church discipline.

It remains that I acquaint the reader that the verses were written for an ingenious young gentleman, my friend, upon his translation of the *Critical History of the Old Testament*, compos'd by the learned Father Simon: the verses therefore are address'd to the translator of that work, and the style of them is, what it ought to be, epistolary.

If anyone be so lamentable a critic as to require the smoothness, the numbers, and the turn of heroic poetry in this poem, I must tell him

that, if he has not read Horace, I have studied him, and hope the style of his *Epistles* is not ill imitated here. The expressions of a poem design'd purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic; for here the poet is presum'd to be a kind of lawgiver, and those three qualities which I have nam'd are proper to the legislative style. The florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by shewing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life, or less; but instruction is to be given by shewing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reason'd into truth.

RELIGIO LAICI

Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars

To lonely, weary, wand'ring travelers,
Is Reason to the soul; and, as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray

Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;

So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight; 10
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.

Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to nature's secret head;

And found that one first principle must be:
But what, or who, that UNIVERSAL HE;
Whether some soul encompassing this ball,
Unmade, unmov'd; yet making, moving all;

Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leapt into form, (the noble work of chance;) 20
Or this great all was from eternity;
Not ev'n the Stagirite himself could see,
And Epicurus guess'd as well as he:
As blindly grop'd they for a future state;
As rashly judg'd of providence and fate:
But least of all could there en-

deavors find
What most concern'd the good of humankind;

For happiness was never to be found,

But vanish'd from 'em like enchanted ground.

Opinions of the several sects of philosophers concerning the *Summum Bonum*.

One thought content the good to be enjoy'd;
This every little accident destroy'd: 30

The wiser madmen did for virtue toil,
A thorny, or at best a barren soil;

In pleasure some their glutton souls }
would steep,

But found their line too short, the well }
too deep,

And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.

Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,

Without a center where to fix the soul;
In this wild maze their vain endeavors end:
How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach Infinity? 40

For what could fathom GOD were more than He.

The Deist thinks he stands *System of*
on firmer ground; *Deism.*

Cries: "Εβρεκα, the mighty secret's found:
God is that spring of good; supreme and best;

We, made to serve, and in that service blest."

If so, some rules of worship must be given,
Distributed alike to all by Heaven:

Else God were partial, and to some denied
The means his justice should for all provide.

This general worship is to PRAISE and PRAY, 50

One part to borrow blessings, one to pay;
And when frail nature slides into offense,
The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.

Yet, since th' effects of providence, we find,

Are variously dispens'd to humankind;
That vice triumphs, and virtue suffers here,
(A brand that sovereign justice cannot bear;)

Our reason prompts us to a future state,
The last appeal from fortune and from fate:

Where God's all-righteous ways will be declared, 60

The bad meet punishment, the good reward.

Thus man by his own strength to heaven would soar,

And would not be oblig'd to *Of reveal'd*
God for more. *Religion.*

Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled

To think thy wit these godlike notions bred!

These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropp'd from heaven, and of a nobler kind.

Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy sight,
And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung the light.

Hence all thy natural worship takes the source: 70

'Tis revelation what thou think'st discourse.
Else, how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,

Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found;
Nor he whose wisdom oracles Socrates.
renown'd.

Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime,
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb?
Canst thou, by Reason, more of Godhead know

Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero?
Those giant wits, in happier ages born, 80
(When arms and arts did Greece and Rome adorn,)

Knew no such system; no such piles could raise

Of natural worship, built on pray'r and praise,

To One Sole God:

Nor did remorse to expiate sin prescribe,
But slew their fellow creatures for a bribe:
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offense,

And cruelty and blood was penitence.
If sheep and oxen could atone for men,
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin! 90

And great oppressors might Heaven's wrath beguile,

By offering his own creatures for a spoil!

Dar'st thou, poor worm, offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be given by thee?

Then thou art Justice in the last appeal:
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel;
And, like a king remote, and weak, must take

What satisfaction thou art pleas'd to make.

But if there be a pow'r too just and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong; 100

Look humbly upward, see his will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose:
A mulet thy poverty could never pay,
Had not eternal wisdom found the way,

And with celestial wealth supplied thy store:
His justice makes the fine, his mercy quits the score.

See God descending in thy human frame;
Th' offended suffering in th' offender's name;

All thy misdeeds to him imputed see,
And all his righteousness devolv'd on thee.

For granting we have sinn'd, and that th' offense 111

Of man is made against Omnipotence,
Some price that bears proportion must be paid,

And infinite with infinite be weigh'd.
See then the Deist lost: remorse for vice,
Not paid; or paid, inadequate in price:
What farther means can Reason now direct,
Or what relief from human wit expect?

That shews us sick; and sadly are we sure
Still to be sick, till Heav'n reveal the cure:
If then Heav'n's will must needs be understood, 121

(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good,)

Let all records of will reveal'd be shown;

With Scripture all in equal balance thrown,

And our one sacred book will be that one. 130

Proof needs not here, for whether we compare

That impious, idle, superstitious ware
Of rites, lustrations, offerings, (which before,

In various ages, various countries bore,)
With Christian faith and virtues, we shall find 140

None answer'ing the great ends of human-kind,

But this one rule of life, that shews us best
How God may be pleas'd, and mortals blest.

Whether from length of time its worth we draw,

The world is scarce more ancient than the law:

Heav'n's early care prescrib'd for every age;

First, in the soul, and after, in the page.
Or, whether more abstractedly we look,
Or on the writers, or the written book,
Whence, but from heav'n, could men unskill'd in arts, 150

In several ages born, in several parts,

Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

If on the book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true;
The doctrine, miracles; which must convince,
For Heav'n in them appeals to human sense:

And tho' they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with nature's laws.

Then for the style; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line:
Commanding words; whose force is still the same

As the first fiat that produc'd our frame.
All faiths beside or did by arms ascend,
Or sense indulg'd has made mankind their friend:

This only doctrine does our lusts oppose,
Unfed by nature's soil, in which it grows;
Cross to our interests, curbing sense and sin;
Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,
It thrives thro' pain; its own tormentors tires;

And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
To what can Reason such effects assign,
Transcending nature, but to laws divine?
Which in that sacred volume are contain'd;
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd.

But stay: the Deist here will urge anew,
No supernatural worship can be true;
Because a general law is that alone
Which must to all, and everywhere, be known:

A style so large as not this book can claim,
Nor aught that bears reveal'd Religion's name.

'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's birth
Is gone thro' all the habitable earth;
But still that text must be confin'd alone
To what was then inhabited, and known:
And what provision could from thence accrue

To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new?
In other parts it helps, that, ages past,
The Scriptures there were known, and were imbrac'd,

Till Sin spread once again the shades of night:

What's that to these who never saw the light?

Of all objections this indeed is chief The objection answer'd.

To startle Reason, stagger frail Belief:

We grant, 't is true, that Heav'n from human sense

Has hid the secret paths of Providence;
But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may

Find ev'n for those bewilder'd souls a way:
If from his nature foes may pity claim,
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name.

And tho' no name be for salvation known,
But that of his eternal Son's alone;
Who knows how far transcending goodness can

Extend the merits of that Son to man?
Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead,

Or ignorance invincible may plead?
Not only charity bids hope the best,
But more the great apostle has express'd:
That if the Gentilés (whom no law inspir'd)

By nature did what was by law requir'd;
They, who the written rule had never known,

Were to themselves both rule and law alone:
To nature's plain indictment they shall plead,

And by their conscience be condemn'd or freed.

Most righteous doom! because a rule reveal'd

Is none to those from whom it was conceal'd.

Then those who follow'd Reason's dictates right,

Liv'd up, and lifted high their natural light;

With Socrates may see their Maker's face,

While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place.

Nor does it balk my charity, to find
Th' Egyptian bishop of another mind:
For tho' his creed eternal truth contains,
'T is hard for man to doom to endless pains

All who believ'd not all his zeal requir'd,
Unless he first could prove he was inspir'd.

Then let us either think he meant to say
This faith, where publish'd, was the only
way;

Or else conclude that, Arius to confute, ²²⁰
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high; and, as his Christian fury rose,
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.

Thus far my charity this path has tried;
(A much unskilful, but well-meaning guide:)

Yet what they are, ev'n these crude thoughts were bred

By reading that which better thou hast read:

Thy matchless author's work; which thou, my friend,

By well translating better dost commend:
Those youthful hours which of thy equals most

In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,

Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd;

And the severe delights of truth enjoy'd.
Witness this weighty book, in which appears

The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years,

Spent by thy author in the sifting care
Of Rabbins' old sophisticated ware
From gold divine; which he who well can sort

May afterwards make algebra a sport:
A treasure, which if country curates buy,

They Junius and Tremellius may defy;
Save pains in various readings and translations,

And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations:

A work so full with various learning fraught,

So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought,

As nature's height and art's last hand requir'd;

As much as man could compass, uninspir'd.
Where we may see what errors have been made

Both in the copier's and translator's trade;
How Jewish, Popish interests have prevail'd,

And where infallibility has fail'd.

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,

Have found our author not too much a priest:

For fashion sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and councils, and tradition's force;
But he that old traditions could subdue,
Could not but find the weakness of the new:

If Scripture, tho' deriv'd from heav'nly birth,

Has been but carelessly preserv'd on earth;
If God's own people, who of God before ²³⁰
Knew what we know, and had been promis'd more,

In fuller terms, of Heaven's assisting care,
And who did neither time nor study spare
To keep this book untainted, unperplex'd,
Let in gross errors to corrupt the text,
Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the sense,
With vain traditions stopp'd the gaping fence,

Which every common hand pull'd up with ease;

What safety from such brushwood-helps as these?

If written words from time are not secur'd,
How can we think have oral sounds endur'd?

Which thus transmitted, if one month has fail'd,

Immortal lies on ages are intail'd;
And that some such have been, is prov'd too plain;

If we consider interest, Church, and gain.

"O, but," says one, "tradition set aside,

Where can we hope for an unerring guide?

For since th' original Scripture has been lost,

All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
Or Christian faith can have no certain ground,

Or truth in Church tradition must be found."

Such an omniscient Church we wish indeed;

'Twere worth both Testaments; and cast in the Creed:

But if this mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truth secure,
Then her infallibility as well

Where copies are corrupt or lame can tell;
Restore lost canon with as little pains,
As truly explicate what still remains;

Digression
to the trans-
lator of
Father
Simon's *Crit-
ical History
of the Old
Testament.*

Of the infall-
ibility of tradi-
tion in general

Which yet no council dare pretend to do,
Unless like Esdras they could write it
new : 291

Strange confidence, still to interpret true,
Yet not be sure that all they have ex-
plain'd,

Is in the blest original contain'd.

More safe, and much more modest 't is, to
say

God would not leave mankind without a
way ;

And that the Scriptures, tho' not every-
where

Free from corruption, or intire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, intire,
In all things which our needful faith re-
quire. 300

If others in the same glass better see,
'T is for themselves they look, but not for
me:

For MY salvation must its doom receive,
Not from what OTHERS but what I believe.

Must all tradition then be Objection in
set aside? behalf of tra-

This to affirm were ignorance urg'd
or pride. by Father

Are there not many points, some needful
sure

To saving faith, that Scripture leaves ob-
scure ?

Which every sect will wrest a several way
(For what one sect interprets, all sects
may): 310

We hold, and say we prove from Scrip-
ture plain,

That Christ is God; the bold Socinian
From the same Scripture urges he 's but
MAN. }

Now what appeal can end th' important
suit ;

Both parts talk loudly, but the rule is
mute ?

Shall I speak plain, and in a nation
free

Assume an honest layman's liberty ?

I think (according to my little skill,
To my own Mother Church submitting
still)

That many have been sav'd, and many
may, 320

Who never heard this question brought in
play.

Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in
gross,

Plods on to heaven, and ne'er is at a loss ;

For the strait gate would be made straiter
yet,

Were none admitted there but men of wit.
'The few by nature form'd, with learning
fraught,

Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
Must study well the sacred page, and see
Which doctrine, this, or that, does best
agree

With the whole tenor of the work divine, 330
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd
design ;

Which exposition flows from genuine sense,
And which is forc'd by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here,
When general, old, disinterest'd and clear:
That ancient Fathers thus expound the
page

Gives truth the reverend majesty of age;
Confirms its force, by bidding every test;
For best authority's next rules are best.
And still the nearer to the spring we go, 340
More limpid, more unsoil'd the waters flow.
Thus, first traditions were a proof alone,
Could we be certain such they were, so
known ;

But since some flaws in long descent may
be,

They make not truth, but probability.
Even Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke.
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale;
But truth by its own sinews will prevail. 349
Tradition written therefore more commends
Authority, than what from voice descends ;
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the sacred history,
Which, from the Universal Church re-
ceiv'd,

Is tried, and after for itself believ'd.

The partial Papists would The second
infer from hence objection.
Their Church, in last resort, should judge
the sense ;

But first they would assume, Answer to the
with wondrous art, objection.
Themselves to be the whole, who are but
part

Of that vast frame, the Church; yet grant
they were 360

The handers down, can they from thence
infer

A right 't interpret ? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their
own ?

The book's a common largess to mankind,
Not more for them than every man design'd;

The welcome news is in the letter found;
The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
In all things needful to be known, is plain.

In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance, ³⁷⁰

A gainful trade their clergy did advance;
When want of learning kept the laymen low,

And none but priests were authoriz'd to know;

When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell,

And he a god who could but read or spell:
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail;
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail;
But still expounded what she sold or gave,
To keep it in her power to damn and save:

Scripture was scarce, and, as the market went, ³⁸⁰

Poor laymen took salvation on content;
As needy men take money, good or bad:
God's word they had not, but the priest's they had.

Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.

In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well,

That by long use they grew infallible:
At last, a knowing age began t' enquire
If they the book, or that did them inspire;
And, making narrower search, they found, tho' late, ³⁹⁰

That what they thought the priest's was their estate,

Taught by the will produc'd, (the written word,)

How long they had been cheated on record.

Then every man who saw the title fair
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share;

Consulted soberly his private good,
And sav'd himself as cheap as e'er he could.

'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence,)

This good had full as bad a consequence:
The book thus put in every vulgar hand, ⁴⁰⁰
Which each presum'd he best could understand,

The common rule was made the common prey,

And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,

And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd:

The spirit gave the doctoral degree; }
And every member of a company }
Was of his trade and of the Bible free. }
Plain truths enough for needful use they found,

But men would still be itching to expound: ⁴¹⁰

Each was ambitious of th' obacurest place,
No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from GRACE.

Study and pains were now no more their care;

Texts were explain'd by fasting and by prayer:

This was the fruit the private spirit brought,

Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought.
While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,

About the sacred viands buzz and swarm,
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,

And turns to maggots what was meant for food. ⁴²⁰

A thousand daily sects rise up and die;
A thousand more the perish'd race supply:
So all we make of Heaven's discover'd will
Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.

The danger's much the same; on several shelves

If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.
What then remains, but, waiving each extreme,

The tides of ignorance and pride to stem?
Neither so rich a treasure to forego;

Nor proudly seek beyond our pow'r to know: ⁴³⁰

Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few and plain:

But since men will believe more than they need,

And every man will make himself a creed,
In doubtful questions 't is the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say;
For 't is not likely we should higher soar
In search of heav'n, than all the Church before;

Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see 439
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
If, after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will;)
'Tis some relief that points not clearly
known

Without much hazard may be let alone:
And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our Reason runs another way,
That private Reason 't is more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
For points obscure are of small use to
learn; 449
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

Thus have I made my own opinions clear;
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse, I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose;
For while from sacred truth I do not
swerve,
Tom Sternhold's, or Tom Sha—ll's rhymes
will serve.

TO THE PIOUS MEMORY OF THE
ACCOMPLISH'D YOUNG LADY,
MRS. ANNE KILLIGREW

EXCELLENT IN THE TWO SISTER-ARTS
OF POESY AND PAINTING, AN ODE

[Publ. 1685]

[Anne Killigrew, daughter of Henry Killigrew, divine, and niece of the dramatists Thomas and William Killigrew, was born in 1660, and died in June, 1685. An edition of her Poems was licensed for the press on September 30 of that year.]

I

Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new pluck'd from paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighboring
star,

Thou roll'st above us, in thy wand'ring
race,
Or, in procession fix'd and regular,
Mov'd with the heavens' majestic pace;
Or, call'd to more superior bliss, 10
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast
abyas:

Whatever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns
divine,

Since heav'n's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise re-
hearse,

In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practice
here,

When thy first fruits of poesy were giv'n,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there; 20
While yet a young probationer,
And caudate of heav'n.

II

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfus'd into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)

But if thy preëxisting soul
Was form'd, at first, with myriads more,
It did thro' all the mighty poets roll, 31
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it
was before.

If so, then cease thy flight, *O heav'n-born
mind!*

Thou hast no dross to purge from thy
rich ore;

Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
Than was the beauteous frame she left
behind:

Return, to fill or mend the choir of thy
celestial kind. }

III

May we presume to say, that at thy
birth

New joy was sprung in heav'n, as well as
here on earth? 40

For sure the milder planets did com-
bine }

On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in
trine.

Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tun'd it high,
That all the people of the sky

Might know a poetess was born on earth.
And then, if ever, mortal ears

Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees 50

On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,

'T was that such vulgar miracles
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:

For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemniz'd there thy birth, and kept thy
holiday above.

IV

O gracious God! how far have we
Profan'd thy heav'nly gift of poesy!
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordain'd above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of
love!

O wretched we! why were we hurried
down

This lubric and adult'rate age,
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own,)

T' increase the steaming ordures of the
stage?

What can we say t' excuse our *second fall*?
Let this thy *vestal*, Heav'n, atone for all:
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoil'd,
Unmix'd with foreign filth, and unde-
fil'd;

Her wit was more than man, her innocence
a child!

70

V

Art she had none, yet wanted none;

For nature did that want supply:

So rich in treasures of her own,

She might our boasted stores defy:

Such noble vigor did her verse adorn

That it seem'd borrow'd, where 't was only
born.

Her morals too were in her bosom bred,

By great examples daily fed,

What in the best of books, her father's life,
she read.

And to be read herself she need not
fear;

80

Each test, and ev'ry light, her Muse will
bear,

Tho' Epictetus with his lamp were there.

Ev'n love (for love sometimes her Muse
express'd)

Was but a *lambent flame* which play'd about
her breast,

Light as the vapors of a morning dream:
So cold herself, whilst she such warmth
express'd,

'T was Cupid bathing in Diana's streams.

VI

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have
been content

To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls con-
fine?

To the next realm she stretch'd her
sway,

For *painure* near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.

A *chamber of dependences* was fram'd,
(As conquerors will never want pretense,
When arm'd, to justify th' offense,)

And the whole sief in right of poetry she
claim'd.

The country open lay without defense;
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent

100

The shape, the face, with ev'ry linea-
ment;

And all the large remains which the *Dumb*
Sister sway'd,

All bow'd beneath her government;
Receiv'd in triumph wheresoe'er she
went.

Her pencil drew whate'er her soul design'd,
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the
image in her mind.

The *sylvan* scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,

Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear

110

The bottom did the top appear;

Of deeper two and ampler floods,

Which, as in mirrors, shew'd the woods;

Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,

And perspectives of pleasant glades,

Where nymphs of brightest form ap-
pear,

And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear:

The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome, or

120

Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns broken
lie,

And, tho' defac'd, the wonder of the eye:
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst
frame,

Her forming hand gave feature to the
name.

So strange a concourse ne'er was seen
before,

But when the peopled ark the whole crea-
tion bore.

VII

The scene then chang'd: with bold
erected look
Our martial king the sight with reverence
strook;

For, not content t' express his outward part,
Her hand call'd out the image of his
heart:

His warlike mind, his soul devoid of }¹³⁰
fear,

His high-designing thoughts were fig-
ur'd there,

As when, by magic, ghosts are made ap-
pear.

Our Phoenix queen was portray'd too so
bright,

Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly
face.

With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from
sacred hands;

Before a train of heroines was seen, }¹⁴⁰
In beauty foremost, as in rank the queen.

Thus nothing to her *genius* was denied,
But like a ball of fire the further thrown,

Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry
side.

What next she had design'd, Heaven only
knows;

To such immoderate growth her conquest
rose

That fate alone its progress could oppose.

VIII

Now all those charms, that blooming
grace,

The well-proportion'd shape, and beauteous
face, }¹⁵⁰

Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes:
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies!

Not wit, nor piety could fate prevent;

Nor was the cruel Destiny content

To finish all the murder at a blow,

To sweep at once her life and beauty
too;

But, like a harden'd felon, took a pride

To work more mischievously slow,

And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd.

O double sacrilege on things divine, }¹⁶⁰

To rob the relic, and deface the shrine!

But thus Orinda died:

Heav'n, by the same disease, did both trans-
late;

As equal were their souls, so equal was their
fate.

IX

Meantime her warlike brother on the seas

His waving streamers to the winds dis-
plays,

And vows for his return, with vain devo-
tion, pays.

Ah, generous youth, that wish forbear,

The winds too soon will waft thee here!

Slack all thy sails, and fear to come, }¹⁷⁰

Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at
home!

No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,

Thou hast already had her last embrace.

But look aloft, and if thou knew'st from
far

Among the Pleiads a new kindled star;

If any sparkles than the rest more bright,

'T is she that shines in that propitious light.

X

When in mid-air the golden trump shall
sound,

To raise the nations under ground;

When in the Valley of Jehosaphat }¹⁸⁰

The judging God shall close the book of
fate,

And there the last assizes keep

For those who wake and those who
sleep;

When rattling bones together fly

From the four corners of the sky;

When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,

Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires

the dead;

The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,

And foremost from the tomb shall bound,

For they are cover'd with the lightest }¹⁹⁰

ground;

And straight, with inborn vigor, on the
wing,

Like mounting larks, to the new morning
sing.

There thou, sweet saint, before the choir

shalt go,

As harbinger of heav'n, the way to show.

The way which thou so well hast learn'd
below.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

[About 1683 a musical society in London began the custom of celebrating November 22, the Feast of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, by a public concert. Dryden wrote the following ode, which was set to music by an Italian composer, Giovanni Battista Draghi, for the performance of 1687.]

I

FROM harmony, from heav'nly harmony
This universal frame began:
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
"Arise, ye more than dead."

Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,

And Music's pow'r obey. 20
From harmony, from heav'nly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Thro' all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

II

What passion cannot Music raise and
quell!

When Jubal struck the corded shell,
His list'ning brethren stood around,
And, wond'ring, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound. 30
Less than a god they thought there could
not dwell

Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and
quell!

III

The Trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.

The double double double beat
Of the thund'ring Drum 30
Cries: "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 't is too late to retreat."

IV

The soft complaining Flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling
Lute.

V

Sharp Violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion, 40
For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI

But O! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred Organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heav'nly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre; 50
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder high'r:
When to her Organ vocal breath was giv'n,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd,
Mistaking earth for heav'n.

GRAND CHORUS

*As from the pow'r of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;
So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour, 60
The Trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.*

ALEXANDER'S FEAST

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC; AN ODE IN
HONOR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY

[Dryden wrote this greatest of his lyric poems for the celebration of the Feast of St. Cecilia (November 22), 1697.]

I

'T WAS at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were plac'd around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles
bound:
(So should desert in arms be
crown'd.)

The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride 10
In flow'r of youth and beauty's pride.

Happy, happy, happy pair !
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair !
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II

Timotheus, plac'd on high 20
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heav'nly joys inspire.

The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the pow'r of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,

When he to fair Olympia press'd; 30
And while he sought her snowy breast:
Then, round her slender waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself, a sov'-
reign of the world.

The list'ning crowd admire the lofty sound;
"A present deity," they shout around;
"A present deity," the vaulted roofs re-
bound:

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod, 40

And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

III

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet mu-
sician sung,

Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets; beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace 51
He shews his honest face:

Now give the hautboys breath; he comes,
he comes.

Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV

Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes; and
thrice he slew the alain.

The master saw the madness rise;
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes; 70
And, while he heav'n and earth defied,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride.

He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltring in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need, 80
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.

With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below; 90
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

V

The mighty master smil'd, to see
That love was in the next degree:
'T was but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
 Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.
 "War," he sung, "is toil and trouble;
 Honor, but an empty bubble; 100
 Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying:
 If the world be worth thy winning,
 Think, O think it worth enjoying;
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
 Take the good the gods provide thee."

The many rend the skies with loud applause;
 So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gaz'd on the fair 110
 Who caus'd his care,
 And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
 At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS

*The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gaz'd on the fair
 Who caus'd his care,
 And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again: 120
 At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.*

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again:
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
 Break his bands of sleep asunder,
 And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.

Hark, hark, the horrid sound
 Has rais'd up his head:
 As awak'd from the dead,
 And amaz'd, he stares around. 130
 "Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries,
 "See the Furies arise!
 See the snakes that they rear,
 How they hiss in their hair,
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
 Behold a ghastly band,
 Each a torch in his hand!
 Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
 And unburied remain
 Inglorious on the plain. 140

Give the vengeance due
 To the valiant crew.
 Behold how they toss their torches on high,
 How they point to the Persian abodes,
 And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods!"
 The princes applaud, with a furious joy;
 And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
 Thais led the way,
 To light him to his prey,
 And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy. 150

CHORUS

*And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
 Thais led the way,
 To light him to his prey,
 And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.*

VII

Thus, long ago,
 Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
 While organs yet were mute;
 Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
 And sounding lyre,
 Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire. 160
 At last, divine Cecilia came,
 Inventress of the vocal frame;
 The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
 Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
 And added length to solemn sounds,
 With nature's mother wit, and arts unknown before.
 Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
 Or both divide the crown;
 He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
 She drew an angel down. 170

GRAND CHORUS

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THEODORE AND HONORIA

FROM BOCCACE

[Publ 1700]

Of all the cities in Romanian lands,
 The chief, and most renown'd, Ravenna
 stands,
 Adorn'd in ancient times with arms and
 arts,
 And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts.
 But Theodore the brave, above the rest,
 With gifts of fortune and of nature blest,
 The foremost place for wealth and honor
 held,

And all in feats of chivalry excell'd.

This noble youth to madness lov'd a
 dame,

Of high degree; Honoria was her name; 10
 Fair as the fairest, but of haughty mind,
 And fiercer than became so soft a kind;
 Proud of her birth, (for equal she had
 none,)

The rest she scorn'd, but hated him alone.
 His gifts, his constant courtship, nothing
 gain'd;

For she, the more he lov'd, the more dis-
 dain'd.

He liv'd with all the pomp he could de-
 vise,

At tilts and tournaments obtain'd the
 prize;

But found no favor in his lady's eyes: 20
 Relentless as a rock, the lofty maid

Turn'd all to poison that he did or said:
 Nor pray'rs, nor tears, nor offer'd vows
 could move;

The work went backward; and, the more
 he strove

T' advance his suit, the farther from her
 love.

Wearied at length, and wanting remedy,
 He doubted oft, and oft resolv'd to die;

But pride stood ready to prevent the blow,
 For who would die to gratify a foe?

His generous mind disdain'd so mean a
 fate;

That pass'd, his next endeavor was to
 hate. 30

But vainer that relief than all the rest;
 The less he hop'd, with more desire pos-
 sess'd;

Love stood the siege, and would not yield
 his breast.

Change was the next, but change deceiv'd
 his care;

He sought a fairer, but found none so fair.
 He would have worn her out by slow de-
 gree,

As men by fasting starve th' untam'd dis-
 ease;

But present love requir'd a present ease. }

Looking he feeds alone his famish'd eyes,
 Feeds ling'ring death, but, looking not, he
 dies. 40

Yet still he chose the longest way to fate,
 Wasting at once his life and his estate.

His friends beheld, and pitied him in
 vain,

For what advice can ease a lover's pain!
 Absence, the best expedient they could find,

Might save the fortune, if not cure the
 mind:

This means they long propos'd, but little
 gain'd,

Yet after much pursuit at length obtain'd.

Hard you may think it was to give con-
 sent,

But struggling with his own desires he
 went, 50

With large expense, and with a pompous
 train,

Provided as to visit France or Spain,
 Or for some distant voyage o'er the main. }

But Love had clipp'd his wings, and cut
 him short,

Confin'd within the purlieus of his court.

Three miles he went, nor farther could re-
 treat;

His travels ended at his country seat:

To Chassi's pleasing plains he took his way,
 There pitch'd his tents, and there resolv'd

to stay.

The spring was in the prime; the neigh-
 b'ring grove 60

Supplied with birds, the choristers of love;

Music unbought, that minister'd delight

To morning walks, and lull'd his cares by
 night:

There he discharg'd his friends, but not th'
 expense

Of frequent treats, and proud magnifi-
 cence.

He liv'd as kings retire, tho' more at large
 From public business, yet with equal charge;

With house and heart still open to re-
 ceive;

As well content as love would give him
 leave:

He would have liv'd more free ; but many
a guest,
Who could forsake the friend, pursued the
feast.

It happ'd one morning, as his fancy led,
Before his usual hour he left his bed,
To walk within a lonely lawn, that stood
On ev'ry side surrounded by the wood.
Alone he walk'd, to please his pensive mind,
And sought the deepest solitude to find :
'T was in a grove of spreading pines he
stray'd ;

The winds within the quiv'ring branches
play'd,
And dancing trees a mournful music
made.

The place itself was suiting to his care,
Uncouth and salvage as the cruel fair.
He wander'd on, unknowing where he went,
Lost in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And summon'd him to due repast at noon,
But Love could feel no hunger but his
own.

Whilst list'ning to the murm'ring leaves
he stood,
More than a mile immers'd within the
wood,

At once the wind was laid; the whisp'ring
sound

Was dumb; a rising earthquake rock'd the
ground;

With deeper brown the grove was over-
spread:

A sudden horror seiz'd his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his color fled.
Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
Seem'd threaten'd, tho' unseen to mortal
eye.

Unus'd to fear, he summon'd all his soul,
And stood collected in himself, and whole;
Not long: for soon a whirlwind rose around,
And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
As of a dame distress'd, who cried for
aid,

And fill'd with loud laments the secret
shade.

A thicket close beside the grove there
stood,

With breers and brambles chok'd, and
dwartish wood;

From thence the noise, which now, ap-
proaching near,

With more distinguish'd notes invades his
ear.

He rais'd his head, and saw a beauteous
maid,

With hair dishevel'd, issuing thro' the
shade;

Stripp'd of her clothes, and e'en those parts
reveal'd,

Which modest Nature keeps from sight
conceal'd.

Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were
torn

With passing thro' the brakes and prickly
thorn;

Two mastiffs gaunt and grim her flight
pursued,

And oft their fasten'd fangs in blood
embrued:

Oft they came up, and pinch'd her tender
side,

"Mercy, O mercy, Heav'n," she ran, and
cried;

When Heav'n was nam'd, they loos'd their
hold again;

Then sprang she forth, they follow'd her
again.

Not far behind, a knight of swarthy
face,

High on a coal-black steed pursued the
chase;

With flashing flames his ardent eyes were
fill'd,

And in his hands a naked sword he held:
He cheer'd the dogs to follow her who
fled,

And vow'd revenge on her devoted head.

As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action rous'd his manly mind;

Mov'd with unworthy usage of the maid,
He, tho' unarm'd, resolv'd to give her aid.

A saplin pine he wrench'd from out the
ground,

The readiest weapon that his fury found.

Thus furnish'd for offense, he cross'd the
way

Betwixt the graceless villain and his prey.

The knight came thund'ring on, but,
from afar,

Thus in imperious tone forbade the war:
"Cease, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,

Nor stop the vengeance of so just a grief;
But give me leave to seize my destin'd
prey,

And let eternal justice take the way:
I but revenge my fate, disdain'd, betray'd.

And suffering death for this ungrateful
maid."

He said, at once dismounting from the steed;
For now the hellhounds, with superior speed,
Had reach'd the dame, and, fast'ning on her side,
The ground with issuing streams of purple dyed.

Stood Theodore surpris'd in deadly fright,
With chatt'ring teeth, and bristling hair upright;

Yet arm'd with inborn worth: "Whate'er," said he,

"Thou art, who know'st me better than I thee;

Or prove thy rightful cause, or be defied."

The specter, fiercely staring, thus replied:
"Know, Theodore, thy ancestry I claim,

And Guido Cavalcanti was my name. ¹⁵²
One common sire our fathers did beget,

My name and story some remember yet:
Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,

When for my sins I lov'd this haughty maid;
Not less ador'd in life, nor serv'd by me,

Than proud Honoria now is lov'd by thee.
What did I not her stubborn heart to

gain?
But all my vows were answer'd with dis-
dain: ¹⁶⁰

She scorn'd my sorrows, and despis'd my
pain.

Long time I dragg'd my days in fruitless
care;

Then, loathing life, and plung'd in deep de-
spair,

To finish my unhappy life, I fell
On this sharp sword, and now am damn'd

in hell.
"Short was her joy; for soon th' insult-
ing maid

By Heav'n's decree in the cold grave was
laid,

And, as in unrepenting sin she died,
Doom'd to the same bad place, is punish'd

for her pride; ¹⁶⁹
Because she deem'd I well deserv'd to die,
And made a merit of her cruelty.

There, then, we met; both tried and both
were cast,

And this irrevocable sentence pass'd;
That she, whom I so long pursued in vain,

Should suffer from my hands a ling'ring
pain:

Renew'd to life that she might daily die,
I daily doom'd to follow, she to fly.

No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
I seek her life (for love is none below):

As often as my dogs with better speed ¹⁸⁰
Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed.

Then with this fatal sword, on which I died,
I pierce her open'd back, or tender side,

And tear that harden'd heart from out her
breast,

Which, with her entrails, makes my hungry
hounds a feast.

Nor lies she long, but, as her fates ordain,
Springs up to life, and fresh to second

pain;
Is sav'd to-day, to-morrow to be slain."

This, vers'd in death, th' infernal knight
relates,

And then for proof fulfill'd their common
fates; ¹⁹⁰

Her heart and bowels thro' her back he
drew,

And fed the hounds that help'd him to pursue.
Stern look'd the fiend, as frustrate of his will,

Not half suffic'd, and greedy yet to kill.
And now the soul, expiring thro' the wound,

Had left the body breathless on the ground,
When thus the grisly specter spoke again:

"Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain:
As many months as I sustain'd her hate,

So many years is she condemn'd by fate ²⁰⁰
To daily death; and ev'ry several place

Conscious of her disdain, and my disgrace,
Must witness her just punishment, and be

A scene of triumph and revenge to me.
As in this grove I took my last farewell,

As on this very spot of earth I fell,
As Friday saw me die, so she my prey

Becomes ev'n here, on this revolving day.
Thus while he spoke, the virgin from

the ground ²⁰⁹
Upstart'd fresh, already clos'd the wound,

And, unconcern'd for all she felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the shore.

The hellhounds, as ungorg'd with flesh and
blood,

Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted
food;

The fiend remounts his courser, mends his
pace,

And all the vision vanish'd from the place.
Long stood the noble youth oppress'd

with awe,
And stupid at the wondrous things he

saw,
Surpassing common faith, transgressing

nature's law.

He would have been asleep, and wish'd to wake,
 But dreams, he knew, no long impression make,
 Tho' strong at first; if vision, to what end,
 But such as must his future state portend,
 His love the damsel, and himself the fiend?

But yet reflecting that it could not be
 From Heav'n, which cannot impious acts decree,

Resolv'd within himself to shun the snare
 Which Hell for his destruction did prepare;
 And, as his better genius should direct,
 From an ill cause to draw a good effect. ²³⁰

Inspir'd from Heav'n, he homeward took
 his way,

Nor pall'd his new design with long delay;
 But of his train a trusty servant sent,
 To call his friends together at his tent.
 They came, and, usual salutations paid,
 With words premeditated thus he said:

"What you have often counsel'd, to remove
 My vain pursuit of unregarded love,
 By thrift my sinking fortune to repair,
 Tho' late, yet is at last become my care: ²⁴⁰
 My heart shall be my own; my vast ex-
 pense

Reduc'd to bounds, by timely providence.
 This only I require; invite for me
 Honoria, with her father's family,
 Her friends, and mine; the cause I shall
 display,

On Friday next, for that's th' appointed
 day."

Well pleas'd were all his friends, the
 task was light;

The father, mother, daughter, they invite;
 Hardly the dame was drawn to this repast;
 But yet resolv'd, because it was the last. ²⁵⁰
 The day was come, the guests invited came,
 And, with the rest, th' inexorable dame;
 A feast prepar'd with riotous expense,
 Much cost, more care, and most magnifi-
 cence.

The place ordain'd was in that haunted
 grove

Where the revenging ghost pursued his love;
 The tables in a proud pavilion spread,
 With flow'rs below, and tissue overhead:
 The rest in rank; Honoria, chief in place,
 Was artfully contriv'd to set her face ²⁶⁰
 To front the thicket, and behold the
 chase.

The feast was serv'd, the time so well fore-
 cast,

That just when the dessert and fruits were
 plac'd,

The fiend's alarm began; the hollow
 sound

Sung in the leaves, the forest shook
 around,

Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd
 the ground.

Nor long before the loud laments arise
 Of one distress'd, and mastiffs' mingled
 cries;

And first the dame came rushing thro'
 the wood,

And next the famish'd hounds that sought
 their food, ²⁷⁰

And grip'd her flanks, and oft essay'd
 their jaws in blood,

Last came the felon, on the sable steel,
 Arm'd with his naked sword, and urg'd his
 dogs to speed.

She ran, and cried; her flight directly
 bent

(A guest unbidden) to the fatal tent,
 The scene of death, and place ordain'd
 for punishment.

Loud was the noise, aghast was every guest;
 The women shriek'd, the men forsook the
 feast;

The hounds at nearer distance hoarsely
 bay'd;

The hunter close pursued the visionary
 maid; ²⁸⁰

She rent the heav'n with loud laments,
 imploring aid.

The gallants, to protect the lady's
 right,

Their fauchions brandish'd at the grisly
 sprite;

High on his stirrups he provok'd the
 fight.

Then on the crowd he cast a furious look.
 And wither'd all their strength before he
 strook:

"Back, on your lives! let be," said he,
 "my prey,

And let my vengeance take the destin'd way.
 Vain are your arms, and vainer your de-
 fense,

Against th' eternal doom of Providence: ²⁹⁰
 Mine is th' ungrateful maid by Heav'n
 design'd;

Mercy she would not give, nor mercy shall
 she find."

At this the former tale again he told
With thund'ring tone, and dreadful to be-
hold.

Sunk were their hearts with horror of the
crime,

Nor needed to be warn'd a second time,
But bore each other back: some knew
the face,

And all had heard the much lamented
case

Of him who fell for love, and this the
fatal place. 299

And now th' infernal minister advanc'd,
Seiz'd the due victim, and with fury launch'd
Her back, and, piercing thro' her inmost
heart,

Drew backward as before th' offending
part.

The reeking entrails next he tore away,
And to his meager mastiffs made a prey.
The pale assistants on each other star'd,
With gaping mouths for issuing words pre-
par'd;

The stillborn sounds upon the palate hung,
And died imperfect on the falt'ring tongue.
The frigit was general; but the female
band 310

(A helpless train) in more confusion stand:
With horror shudd'ring, on a heap they
run,

Sick at the sight of hateful justice done;
For conscience rung th' alarm, and made
the case their own.

So spread upon a lake, with upward eye,
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high;
They close their trembling troop, and all
attend

On whom the sousing eagle will descend.

But most the proud Honoria fear'd th'
event,

And thought to her alone the vision sent. 320
Her guilt presents to her distracted mind
Heav'n's justice, Theodore's revengeful
kind,

And the same fate to the same sin
assign'd—

Already sees herself the monster's prey,
And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
'Twas a mute scene of sorrow, mix'd with
fear;

Still on the table lay th' unfinished cheer:
The knight and hungry mastiffs stood
around,

The mangled dame lay breathless on the
ground: 329

When on a sudden, reinspir'd with breath,
Again she rose, again to suffer death;
Nor stay'd the hellhounds, nor the hunter
stay'd,

But follow'd, as before, the flying maid;
Th' avenger took from earth th' avenging
sword,

And mounting light as air his sable steed
he spur'd:

The clouds dispell'd, the sky resum'd her
light,

And Nature stood recover'd of her fright.

But fear, the last of ills, remain'd behind,
And horror heavy sat on ev'ry mind.

Nor Theodore encourag'd more his feast, 340
But sternly look'd, as hatching in his breast
Some deep design; which when Honoria
view'd,

The fresh impulse her former fright re-
new'd:

She thought herself the trembling dame
who fled,

And him the grisly ghost that spur'd th'
infernal steed;

The more dismay'd, for when the guests
withdrew,

Their courteous host, saluting all the crew,
Regardless pass'd her o'er, nor grac'd
with kind adieu.

That sting infix'd within her haughty
mind,

The downfall of her empire she divin'd;
And her proud heart with secret sorrow
pin'd. 351

Home as they went, the sad discourse
renew'd,

Of the relentless dame to death pursued,
And of the sight obscene so lately view'd.

None durst arraign the righteous doom she
bore;

Ev'n they who pitied most, yet blam'd her
more:

The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damn'd the living
dame.

At ev'ry little noise she look'd behind,
For still the knight was present to her
mind; 360

And anxious oft she started on the way,
And thought the horseman ghost came
thund'ring for his prey.

Return'd, she took her bed, with little
rest,

But in short slumbers dreamt the funeral
feast:

Awak'd, she turn'd her side, and slept
again;
The same black vapors mounted in her
brain,
And the same dreams return'd with
double pain.

Now forc'd to wake, because afraid to
sleep,

Her blood all fever'd, with a furious leap
She sprung from bed, distracted in her
mind,

And fear'd, at ev'ry step, a twitching sprite
behind.

Darkling and desp'rate, with a stagg'ring
pace,

Of death afraid, and conscious of disgrace;
Fear, pride, remorse, at once her heart
assail'd;

Pride put remorse to flight, but fear pre-
vail'd.

Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her soul forethought the fiend would
change his game,

And her pursue, or Theodore be slain,
And two ghosts join their packs to hunt her
o'er the plain.

This dreadful image so possess'd her
mind,

That desp'rate any succor else to find,
She ceas'd all farther hope; and now began
To make reflection on th' unhappy man.

Rich, brave, and young, who past expression
lov'd,

Proof to disdain, and not to be remov'd:
Of all the men respected and admir'd;
Of all the dames, except herself, desir'd —
Why not of her, preferr'd above the rest
By him with knightly deeds, and open
love profess'd?

So had another been, where he his vows
address'd.

This quell'd her pride, yet other doubts
remain'd,

That, once disdaining, she might be dis-
dain'd.

The fear was just, but greater fear pre-
vail'd,

Fear of her life by hellish hounds assail'd:

He took a low'ring leave, but who can tell
What outward hate might inward love con-
ceal?

Her sex's arts she knew, and why not,
then,

Might deep dissembling have a place in
men?

Here hope began to dawn; resolv'd to try,
She fix'd on this her utmost remedy:
Death was behind, but hard it was to die.
'Twas time enough at last on death to call,
The precipice in sight: a shrub was all
'That kindly stood betwixt to break the
fatal fall.

One maid she had, belov'd above the rest;
Secure of her, the secret she confess'd;
And now the cheerful light her fears dis-
pell'd,

She with no winding turns the truth con-
ceal'd,

But put the woman off, and stood reveal'd:
With faults confess'd commission'd her to
go,

If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe.
The welcome message made was soon re-
ceiv'd;

'Twas what he wish'd, and hop'd, but scarce
believ'd:

Fate seem'd a fair occasion to present;
He knew the sex, and fear'd she might
repent,

Should he delay the moment of consent.
There yet remain'd to gain her friends (a
care

The modesty of maidens well might spare);
But she with such a zeal the cause embrac'd,
(As women, where they will, are all in
haste,)

That father, mother, and the kin beside,
Were overborne by fury of the tide:
With full consent of all she chang'd her
state,

Resistless in her love, as in her hate.

By her example warn'd, the rest beware;
More easy, less imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil de-
sign'd

For one fair female, lost him half the kind

ALEXANDER POPE

ODE ON SOLITUDE

[Written perhaps in 1700]

HAPPY the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with
bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Bless'd who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind, 11
Quiet by day;

Sound sleep by night: study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie. 20

EPISTLE TO MRS. BLOUNT, WITH THE WORKS OF VOITURE

[To Teresa Blount. First published in 1712]

In these gay thoughts the Loves and Graces
shine,
And all the writer lives in ev'ry line;
His easy Art may happy Nature seem,
Trifles themselves are elegant in him.
Sure to charm all was his peculiar fate,
Who without flatt'ry pleas'd the Fair and
Great;
Still with esteem no less convers'd than read,
With wit well-natured, and with books well-
bred:

His heart his mistress and his friend did
share, 9

His time the Muse, the witty, and the fair.
Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
Cheerful he play'd the trifle, Life, away;
Till Fate scarce felt his gentle breath sup-
press,

As smiling infants sport themselves to rest.
Ev'n rival Wits did Voiture's death de-
plore,

And the gay mourn'd who never mourn'd
before;

The truest hearts for Voiture heav'd with
sighs,

Voiture was wept by all the brightest
eyes:

The Smiles and Loves had died in Voiture's
death, 19

But that for ever in his lines they breathe.

Let the strict life of graver mortals be

A long, exact, and serious Comedy;

In ev'ry scene some Moral let it teach,

And, if it can, at once both please and
preach.

Let mine an innocent gay farce appear,

And more diverting still than regular,

Have Humour, Wit, a native Ease and
Grace,

Tho' not too strictly bound to Time and
Place:

Critics in Wit, or Life, are hard to please,
Few write to those, and none can live to
these. 30

Too much your Sex is by their forms
confin'd,

Severe to all, but most to Womankind;

Custom, grown blind with Age, must be
your guide;

Your pleasure is a vice, but not your pride;

By Nature yielding, stubborn but for fame,

Made slaves by honour, and made fools by
shame;

Marriage may all those petty tyrants chase;

But sets up one, a greater, in their place;

Well might you wish for change by those
accurat, 39

But the last tyrant ever proves the worst.

Still in constraint your suff'ring Sex re-
mains,

Or bound in formal, or in real chains :
Whole years neglected, for some months
ador'd,

The fawning Servant turns a haughty Lord.
Ah, quit not the free innocence of life,
For the dull glory of a virtuous Wife;
Nor let false shows, or empty titles please;
Aim not at Joy, but rest content with
Ease.

The Gods, to curse Pamela with her
pray'rs,
Gave the gilt coach and dappled Flanders
mares,

The shining robes, rich jewels, beds of state,
And, to complete her bliss, a fool for
mate.

She glares in Balls, front Boxes, and the
Ring,

A vain, unquiet, glitt'ring, wretched thing !
Pride, Pomp, and State but reach her out-
ward part ;

She sighs, and is no Duchess at her heart.
But, Madam, if the fates withstand, and
you

Are destin'd Hymen's willing victim too ;
Trust not too much your now resistless
charms,

Those Age or Sickness soon or late dis-
arms :

Good humour only teaches charms to last,
Still makes new conquests, and maintains
the past ;

Love, rais'd on Beauty, will like that decay,
Our hearts may bear its slender chain a
day ;

As flow'ry bands in wantonness are worn,
A morning's pleasure, and at evening torn ;
This binds in ties more easy, yet more
strong,

The willing heart, and only holds it long.

Thus Voiture's early care still shone the
same,

And Montausier was only changed in name ;
By this, ev'n now they live, ev'n now they
charm,

Their wit still sparkling, and their flames
still warm.

Now crown'd with myrtle, on th' Elysian
coast,

Amid those lovers, joys his gentle Ghost :
Pleas'd, while with smiles his happy lines
you view,

And finds a fairer Rambouillet in you.

The brightest eyes of France inspired his
Muse ;

The brightest eyes of Britain now peruse ;
And dead, as living, 't is our Author's
pride

Still to charm those who charm the world
beside.

ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE LADY

[Publ. 1717]

WHAT beck'ning ghost along the moon-
light shade

Invites my steps, and points to yonder
glade ?

'T is she ! — but why that bleeding bosom
gor'd ?

Why dimly gleams the visionary sword ?
Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly ! tell,
Is it, in Heav'n, a crime to love too well ?

To bear too tender or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part ?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky
For those who greatly think, or bravely

die ?

Why bade ye else, ye Powers ! her soul
aspire

Above the vulgar flight of low desire ?
Ambition first sprung from your blest
abodes,

The glorious fault of Angels and of Gods :
Thence to their images on earth it flows,
And in the breasts of Kings and Heroes
glows.

Most souls, 't is true, but peep out once an
age,

Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage ;
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of
years

Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres ;
Like eastern Kings a lazy state they keep,
And, close confin'd to their own palace,
sleep.

From these, perhaps (ere Nature bade
her die),

Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying
sky.

As into air the purer spirits flow,
And seprate from their kindred dregs be-
low ;

So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.

But thou, false guardian of a charge too
 good,
 Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's
 blood!
 See on these ruby lips the trembling
 breath,
 These cheeks now fading at the blast of
 death;
 Cold is that breast which warm'd the world
 before,
 And those love-darting eyes must roll no
 more.
 Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball,
 Thus shall your wives, and thus your chil-
 dren fall;
 On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
 And frequent hearses shall besiege your
 gates;
 There passengers shall stand, and pointing
 say
 (While the long funerals blacken all the
 way),
 Lo! these were they whose souls the fu-
 ries steel'd,
 And cursed with hearts unknowing how to
 yield.
 Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
 The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
 So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to
 glow
 For others' good, or melt at others' woe.
 What can atone, O ever injured shade!
 Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?
 No friend's complaint, no kind domestic
 tear.
 Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or graced thy
 mournful bier;
 By foreign hands thy dying eyes were
 closed,
 By foreign hands thy decent limbs com-
 posed,
 By foreign hands thy humble grave
 adorn'd,
 By strangers honour'd, and by strangers
 mourn'd.

What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,
 Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a
 year,
 And bear about the mockery of woe
 To midnight dances, and the public show?
 What tho' no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
 Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?
 What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,
 Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy
 tomb?
 Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be
 dress'd,
 And the green turf lie lightly on thy
 breast:
 There shall the morn her earliest tears be-
 stow,
 There the first roses of the year shall blow;
 While angels with their silver wings o'er
 shade
 The ground, now sacred by thy relics made.
 So peaceful rests, without a stone, a
 name,
 What once had Beauty, Titles, Wealth and
 Fame.
 How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee
 not,
 To whom related, or by whom begot;
 A heap of dust alone remains of thee;
 'T is all thou art, and all the proud shall
 be!
 Poets themselves must fall like those they
 sung,
 Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful
 tongue.
 Ev'n he whose soul now melts in mournful
 lays,
 Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he
 pays;
 Then from his closing eyes thy form shall
 part,
 And the last pang shall tear thee from his
 heart;
 Life's idle bus'ness at one gasp be o'er,
 The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no
 more!

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuere tuis.
Mart. Epig. xii. 84.

'It appears by this motto,' says Pope, in a footnote supplied for Warburton's edition, 'that the following poem was written or published at the lady's request. But there are some other circumstances not unworthy relating. Mr. Caryl (a gentleman who was secretary to Queen Mary, wife of James II., whose fortunes he followed into France, author of the comedy of *Sir Solomon Single*, and of several translations in Dryden's *Miscellanies*) originally proposed it to him in a view of putting an end, by this piece of ridicule, to a quarrel that was risen between two noble families, those of Lord Petre and Mrs. Fermor, on the trifling occasion of his having cut off a lock of her hair. The author sent it to the lady, with whom he was acquainted; and she took it so well as to give about copies of it. That first sketch (we learn from one of his letters) was written in less than a fortnight, in 1711, in two cantos only, and it was so printed first, in a *Miscellany* of Bern. Lintot's, without the name of the author. But it was received so well that he made it more considerable the next year by the addition of the machinery of the Sylphs, and extended it to five cantos.'

TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMORE

MADAM, — It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to you. Yet you may bear me witness it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a bookseller, you had the good-nature for my sake, to consent to the publication of one more correct: this I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Demons, are made to act in

a poem: for the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies; let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These Machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a lady; but it is so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms. The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *La Comte de Gabalis*, which, both in its title and size, is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes, or Demons of earth, delight in mischief; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are the best-conditioned creatures imaginable; for, they say, any mortal may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, — an inviolate preservation of chastity.

As to the following cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person or in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the world half so uncensured as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, Madam,

Your most obedient, humble servant,
A. POPE.

CANTO I

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes
springs,

What mighty contests rise from trivial
things,

I sing — This verse to *Caryll*, muse ! is
due:

This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view :
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

Say what strange motive, Goddess ! could
compel

A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle ?
O say what stranger cause, yet unex-
plor'd,

Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord ? 10
In tasks so bold can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty
rage ?

Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous
ray,

And oped those eyes that must eclipse the
day.

Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing
shake,

And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd
the ground,

And the press'd watch return'd a silver
sound.

Belinda still her downy pillow preat,
Her guardian Sylph prolong'd the balmy
rest. 20

'T was he had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her
head;

A youth more glitt'ring than a Birthnight
Beau

(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to
glow)

Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to
say :

' Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd
care

Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air !
If e'er one vision touch'd thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have
taught — 30

Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-powers,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly
flowers;

Hear and believe ! thy own importance
know,

Nor bound thy narrow views to things be-
low.

Some secret truths, from learned pride con-
ceal'd,

To maids alone and children are reveal'd:
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may
give ?

The fair and innocent shall still believe. 40
Know, thou, unnumber'd Spirits round thee
fly,

The light militia of the lower sky:
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Haug o'er the Box, and hover round the
Ring.

Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclosed in woman's beauteous
mould;

Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50
Think not, when woman's transient breath
is fled,

That all her vanities at once are dead ;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And, tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the
cards.

Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre, after death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire.
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame 59
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a
Gnome

In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

' Know further yet: whoever fair and
chaste

Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph em-
braced;

For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with
ease

Assume what sexes and what shapes they
please. 70

What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the dar-
ing spark,

The glance by day, the whisper in the dark;

When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?

'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,

Tho' Honour is the word with men below.

'Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,

For life predestin'd to the Gnome's embrace. 80

These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,

When offers are disdain'd, and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,

And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, "Your Grace" salutes their ear.

'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau. 90

'Oft, when the world imagine women stray,

The Sylphs thro' mystic mazes guide their way;

Thro' all the giddy circle they pursue,

And old impertinence expel by new.

What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,

If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart; 100

Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,

Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.

This erring mortals levity may call;

Oh blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.

'Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But Heav'n reveals not what, or how or where. 111

Warn'd by the Sylph, O pious maid, beware!

This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!

He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,

Leap'd up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.

'T was then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read, 114

But all the vision vanish'd from thy head.

And now, nuveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,

Each silver vase in mystic order laid.

First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,

With head uncover'd, the cosmetic powers.
A heav'ly image in the glass appears;
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.

Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil, 121

And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white.

Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms; 129
The Fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,

These set the head, and those divide the hair,

Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;

And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams

Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-dress'd youths
around her shone,

But every eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she
wore,

Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends; 11
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers
strike,

And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of
pride,

Might hide her faults, if belles had faults
to hide;

If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em
all.

This nymph, to the destruction of man-
kind,

Nourish'd two locks, which graceful hung
behind 20

In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry
neck.

Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender
chains.

With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks
admired;

He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspired.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way, 31
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attain'd his
ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had im-
plor'd

Propitious Heav'n, and every Power ador'd,
But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly
gilt.

There lay three garters, half a pair of
gloves,

And all the trophies of his former loves; 40
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise
the fire.

Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent
eyes

Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The Powers gave ear, and granted half his
prayer,

The rest the winds dispers'd in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel
glides,

The sunbeams trembling on the floating
tides;

While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die:

Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently
play, 51

Belinda smil'd, and all the world was
gay.

All but the Sylph — with careful thoughts
oppress

Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;

The lucid squadrons round the sails re-
pair:

Soft o'er the shrouds ærial whispers
breathe

That seem'd but zephyrs to the train be-
neath.

Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of
gold; 60

Transparent forms too fine for mortal
sight,

Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments
flew,

Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,

Where light disports in ever-mingling
dyes,

While ev'ry beam new transient colours
flings,

Colours that change whene'er they wave
their wings.

Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head was Ariel placed; 70

His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:

'Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief
give ear.

Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons,
hear!

Ye know the spheres and various tasks
assign'd

By laws eternal to th' ærial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,

And bask and whiten in the blaze of day:

Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs
on high,
Or roll the planets thro' the boundless
sky: 80
Some, less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale
light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the
night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry
main,
Or o'er the globe distil the kindly rain.
Others, on earth, o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions
guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British
Throne. 90
'Our humbler province is to tend the
Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the Powder from too rude a gale;
Nor let th' imprison'd Essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal
flowers;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in
showers
A brighter Wash; to curl their waving
hairs,
Assist their blushes and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow.
'This day black omens threat the bright-
est Fair, 101
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force or slight;
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt
in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's
law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade,
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade,
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock
must fall. 110
Haste, then, ye Spirits! to your charge re-
pair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite
Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

'To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petti-
coat;
Oft have we known that sev'n-fold fence to
fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs
of whale: 120
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
'Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the Fair at
large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake
his sins:
Be stopp'd in vials, or transfir'd with
pins,
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums shall his flight re-
strain,
While clogg'd he beats his silken wings in
vain, 130
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivell'd
flower:
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths be-
low!'
He spoke; the spirits from the sails de-
scend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph ex-
tend;
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
With beating hearts the dire event they
wait, 141
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of
Fate.

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd
with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his ris-
ing towers
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton
takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall fore-
doom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at
home;

Here, thou, great ANNA! whom three
realms obey,

Dost sometimes counsel take — and some-
times tea.

Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs re-
sort,

To taste awhile the pleasures of a court; 10
In various talk th' instructive hours they
past,

Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian
screen;

A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies.

Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of
chat,

With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of
day,

The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence
sign, 21

And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns
in peace,

And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous
knights,

At Ombre singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet
to come.

Straight the three bands prepare in arms
to join,

Each band the number of the sacred Nine. 31
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial
guard

Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,
Then each according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient
race,

Are, as when women, wondrous fond of
place.

Behold four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard;
And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain
a flower

Th' expressive emblem of their softer
power; 40

Four Knaves, in garbs succinct, a trusty
band,

Caps on their heads, and halberts in their
hand

And party-colour'd troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with
care;

'Let Spades be trumps!' she said, and
trumps they were.

Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!

Led off two captive trumps, and swept the
board. 50

As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant
field.

Him Basto follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gai'd but one trump and one plebeian card.

With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,

Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd;
The rest his many colour'd robe conceal'd.

The rebel Knave, who dares his prince en-
gage,

Proves the just victim of his royal rage. 60
Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens
o'erthrew,

And mow'd down armies in the fights of
Loo,

Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade.

Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron Fate inclines the field.

His warlike amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.

The Club's black tyrant first her victim
died,

Spite of his haughty mien and barb'rous
pride: 70

What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;

That long behind he trails his pompous
robe,

And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his Diamonds pours
apace;

Th' embroider'd King who shows but half
his face,

And his refulgent Queen, with powers com-
bin'd,

Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder
seen,

With throngs promiscuous strew the level
green. 80

Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Africa's sable sons,

With like confusion diff'rent nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye;
The pierced battalions disunited fall
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms
them all.

The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily
arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen
of Hearts.

At this, the blood the virgin's cheek for-
sook,

A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching
ill, 91

Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.
And now (as oft in some distemper'd state)
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral
fate!

An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King
unseen

Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his cap-
tive Queen.

He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate
Ace.

The nymph, exulting, fills with shouts the
sky;

The walls, the woods, and long canals re-
ply. 100

Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to
fate,

Too soon dejected, and too soon elate:
Sudden these honours shall be snatch'd
away,

And curs'd for ever this victorious day.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons
is crown'd,

The berries crackle, and the mill turns
round;

On shining altars of japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:

From silver spouts the grateful liquors
glide,

While China's earth receives the smoking
tide. 110

At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.

Straight hover round the Fair her airy
band;

Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor
fann'd,

Some o'er her lap their careful plumes dis-
play'd,

Trembling, and conscious of the rich bro-
cade.

Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut
eyes)

Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 't is too
late, 121

Fear the just Gods, and think of Seylla's
fate!

Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!

But when to mischief mortals bend their
will,

How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clariassa drew with tempting
grace

A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the
fight. 130

He takes the gift with reverence, and ex-
tends

The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her
head.

Swift to the Lock a thousand sprites re-
pair;

A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the
hair;

And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her
ear;

Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe
drew near. 138

Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought:

As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind,

Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.

Amazed, confused, he found his power ex-
pired,

Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retired.

The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring for-
fex wide,

T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to di-
vide.

Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interpos'd;

Fate urg'd the shears, and cut the Sylph
in twain 151

(But airy substance soon unites again).

The meeting points the sacred hair sever
From the fair head, for ever, and for
ever!

Then flash'd the living lightning from
her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted
skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are
cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe
their last;
Or when rich China vessels, fall'n from
high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments
lie! 160
'Let wreaths of triumph now my temples
twine,'
The Victor cried, 'the glorious prize is
mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in
air,
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When numerous wax-lights in bright order
blaze:
While nymphs take treats, or assignations
give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall
live! 170
What Time would spare, from Steel re-
ceives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to Fate!
Steel could the labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial towers of
Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride con-
found
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder, then, fair Nymph! thy hairs
should feel
The conquering force of unresisted steel?'

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph op-
press,
And secret passions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms sur-
vive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her mantua's pinn'd
swrv.

E'er felt such rage, resentment, and de-
spair,

As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd hair.

For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs
withdrew, 11

And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Unbriell, a dusky, melancholy sprite
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy cave of
Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the
Gnome,

And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that
blows. 20

Here in a grotto shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's de-
tested glare,

She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne; alike in
place,

But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature, like an ancient
maid,

Her wrinkled form in black and white ar-
ray'd!

With store of prayers for mornings, nights,
and noons.

Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lam-
poons. 30

There Affection, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride;
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown for sickness and for
show.

The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new
disease.

A constant vapour o'er the palace flies
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful as hermits' dreams in haunted
shades, 41

Or bright as visions of expiring maids:
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling
spires,

Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple
fires;

Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in ma-
chines.

Unnumber'd throngs on ev'ry side are
seen,
Of bodies changed to various forms by
Spleen.
Here living Teapots stand, one arm held
out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the
spout: 50
A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie
talks;
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy
works,
And maids turn'd bottles call aloud for
corks.

Safe pass'd the Gnome thro' this fantastic
band,
A branch of healing spleenwort in his
hand.
Then thus address'd the Power — 'Hail,
wayward Queen!

Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of Vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysterick or poetic fit, 60
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble
plays;

Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.

A nymph there is that all your power dis-
dains,
And thousands more in equal mirth main-
tain.

But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a
grace,

Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game; 70
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lapdog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could
ease,

Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin;
That single act gives half the world the
spleen.'

The Goddess, with a discontented air,
Seems to reject him tho' she grants his
prayer. 80

A wondrous Bag with both her hands she
binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the
winds;

There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of
tongues.

A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing
tears.

The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts
to day.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he
found,

Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound. 90
Full o'er their heads the swelling Bag he
rent,

And all the Furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.

'O wretched maid!' she spread her hands,
and cried

(While Hampton's echoes, 'Wretched
maid!' replied),

Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance
bound?

For this with torturing irons wreathed
around? 100

For this with fillets straiu'd your tender
head,

And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivall'd shrine
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, all, our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,

And all your honour in a whisper lost! 110
How shall I, then, your hapless fame de-
fend?

'T will then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heighten'd by the diamond's circling
rays,

On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow,
And Wits take lodgings in the sound of
Bow;

Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish
all! 120

She said; then raging to Sir Plume re-
pairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs

(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane):
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking
face,

He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out — 'My lord, why, what
the devil!

Z—ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you
must be civil!

Plague on 't! 't is past a jest — nay, prithee,
pox!

Give her the hair.' — He spoke, and rapp'd
his box. ¹³⁰

'It grieves me much,' replied the Peer
again,

'Who speaks so well should ever speak in
vain:

But by this Lock, this sacred Lock, I swear
(Which never more shall join its parted
hair;

Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it
grew),

That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever
wear.'

He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph
spread

The long-contended honours of her head. ¹⁴⁰
But Umbriel, hateful Gnome, forbears

not so;
He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows
flow.

Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief ap-
pears,

Her eyes half-languishing, half drown'd in
tears;

On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping
head,

Which with a sigh she rais'd, and thus she
said:

'For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl
away!

Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never
seen! ¹⁵⁰

Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betray'd.

O had I rather unadmired remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;

Where the gilt chariot never marks the
way,

Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste
Boheal!

There kept my charms conceal'd from
mortal eye,

Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What mov'd my mind with youthful lords
to roam?

O had I stay'd, and said my prayers at
home; ¹⁶⁰

'T was this the morning omens seem'd to
tell,

Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-
box fell;

The tott'ring china shook without a wind;
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most
unkind!

A Sylph, too, warn'd me of the threats of
fate,

In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor remuants of these slighted
hairs!

My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine
spares.

These, in two sable ringlets taught to
break,

Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth alone, ¹⁷¹

And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal shears de-
mands,

And tempts once more thy sacrilegious
hands.

O hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in
tears;

But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's
ears.

In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?

Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido raged in
vain.

Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her
fan;

Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
'Say, why are beauties prais'd and hon-
our'd most,

The wise man's passion, and the vain
man's toast? ¹⁰

Why deck'd with all that land and sea af-
ford,

Why angels call'd, and angel-like ador'd?

Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd beaux ?

Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows ?

How vain are all these glories, all our pains,

Unless Good Sense preserve what Beauty gains;

That men may say when we the front-box grace,

"Behold the first in virtue as in face !"

Oh ! if to dance all night, and dress all day,

Charm'd the smallpox, or chased old age away;

Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,

Or who would learn one earthly thing of use ?

To patch, nay, ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.

But since, alas ! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since looks will turn to gray;

Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,

And she who scorns a man must die a maid;

What then remains, but well our power to use,

And keep good humour still whate'er we lose ?

And trust me, dear, good humour can prevail,

When arts, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.

Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.

So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;

Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her prude.

'To arms, to arms !' the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.

All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whale-bones crack;

Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,

And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,

Like Gods they fight nor dread a mortal wound.

So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,

And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;

'Gainst Pallas, Mars ; Latona, Hermes arms;

And all Olympus rings with loud alarms;
Jove's thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around,

Blue Neptune storms, the bell-wing deeps resound:

Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way,

And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day !

Triumphant Umbriel, on a scone's height,

Clapp'd his glad wings, and sat to view the fight:

Propp'd on their bodkin-spears, the sprites survey

The growing combat, or assist the fray.

While thro' the press enraged Thalestris flies,

And scatters death around from both her eyes,

A Beau and Witting perish'd in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song:

'O cruel Nymph ! a living death I bear,'
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.

A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,

'Those eyes are made so killing' — was his last.

Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies
Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,

Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown;

She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again.

Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,

Weights the men's wits against the lady's hair;

The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;

At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.

See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes;

Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold lord, with manly strength en-
dued,

She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils
drew, 81

A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Guomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'er-
flows,

And the high dome reëchoes to his nose.
'Now meet thy fate,' incens'd Belinda
cried,

And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-grand-sire wore about his
neck, 90

In three seal-rings; which after, melted
down,

Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore and now Belinda
wears.)

'Boast not my fall,' he cried, 'insulting
foe !

Thou by some other shalt be laid as low;
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind ! 100
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames — but burn
alive.'

'Restore the Lock !' she cries; and all
around

'Restore the Lock !' the vaulted roofs re-
bound.

Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his
pain.

But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost !
The lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept
with pain,

In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in
vain: 110

With such a prize no mortal must be blest.
So Heav'n decrees ! with Heav'n who can
contest ?

Some thought it mounted to the lunar
sphere,

Since all things lost on earth are treasured
there.

There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous
vases,
And beaux' in snuffboxes and tweezer-
cases.

There broken vows, and deathbed alms are
found,

And lovers' hearts with ends of riband
bound,

The courtier's promises, and sick man's
prayers,

The smiles of harlots, and the tears of
heirs, 120

Cages for guats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.

But trust the Muse — she saw it upward
rise,

Tho' mark'd by none but quick poetic eyes
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'n's
withdrew,

To Proculus alone confess'd in view):

A sudden star, it shot thro' liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heav'n's bespangling with dishevell'd
light. 130

The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd pursue its progress thro' the
skies.

This the beau monde shall from the Mall
survey,

And hail with music its propitious ray;
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake;
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless
skies,

When next he looks thro' Galileo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall fore-
doom

The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome. 140
Then cease, bright Nymph ! to mourn thy
ravish'd hair,

Which adds new glory to the shining
sphere !

Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For after all the murders of your eye,

When, after millions slain, yourself shall
die;

When those fair suns shall set, as set they
must,

And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to
fame,

And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's
name. 150

ELOISA TO ABELARD

The origin of this famous poem seems to have lain jointly in Pope's perception of the poetic availability of the Héloïse-Abelard legend, and in his somewhat factitious grief in his separation from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. They met in 1715, became friends, and in

1716 Lady Mary left England. In a letter of June, 1717, Pope commends the poem to her consideration, with a suggestion of the personal applicability of the concluding lines to his own suffering under the existing circumstance of their separation.

ELOISA TO ABELARD

ARGUMENT

Abelard and Eloisa flourished in the twelfth century; they were two of the most distinguished persons of their age in Learning and Beauty, but for nothing more famous than for their unfortunate passion. After a long course of calamities, they retired each to a several convent, and consecrated the remainder of their days to Religion. It was many years after this separation that a letter of Abelard's to a friend, which contained the history of his misfortune, fell into the hands of Eloisa. This, awakening all her tenderness, occasioned those celebrated letters (out of which the following is partly extracted), which give so lively a picture of the struggles of Grace and Nature, Virtue and Passion.

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive Contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing Melancholy reigns,
What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?

Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?

Yet, yet I love! — From Abelard it came,
And Eloisa yet must kiss the name.

Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,
Nor pass these lips, in holy silence seal'd: so
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,

Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies:
O write it not, my hand — the name appears

Already written — wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.

Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains
Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:

Ye rugged rocks, which holy knees have woru;

Ye grotts and caverns shagg'd with horrid thorn!

Shrines! where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep,

And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!

Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,

I have not yet forgot myself to stone.

All is not Heav'n's while Abelard has part,
Still rebel Nature holds out half my heart;
Nor prayers nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,

Nor tears, for ages taught to flow in vain.

Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes.

Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!

Still breathed in sighs, still usher'd with a tear.

I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,
Led thro' a safe variety of woe:

Now warm in love, now with'ring in my bloom,

Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!

There stern religion quench'd th' unwilling flame,

There died the best of passions, Love and Fame.

Yet write, O write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.

Nor foes nor fortune take this power away;
And is my Abelard less kind than they?

Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare;

Love but demands what else were shed in prayer.

No happier task these faded eyes pursue;
To read and weep is all they now can do.

Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief;
 Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief.
 Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
 Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;
 They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
 Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;
 The virgin's wish without her fears impart,
 Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
 Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
 And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.
 Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,
 When Love approach'd me under Friendship's name;
 My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,
 Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind.
 Those smiling eyes, attempt'ring every ray,
 Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day,
 Guiltless I gazed; Heav'n listen'd while you sung;
 And truths divine came mended from that tongue.
 From lips like those what precept fail'd to move?
 Too soon they taught me 't was no sin to love:
 Back thro' the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
 Nor wish'd an angel whom I loved a man.
 Dim and remote the joys of saints I see;
 Nor envy them that Heav'n I lose for thee.
 How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,
 Curse on all laws but those which Love has made!
 Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
 Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.
 Let Wealth, let Honour, wait the wedded dame,
 August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
 Before true passion all those views remove;
 Fame, Wealth, and Honour! what are you to Love?
 The jealous God, when we profane his fires,
 Those restless passions in revenge inspires,
 And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
 Who seek in love for aught but love alone.

Should at my feet the world's great master fall,
 Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em all:
 Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove;
 No, make me mistress to the man I love;
 If there be yet another name more free,
 More fond than mistress, make me that to thee!
 O happy state! when souls each other draw,
 When Love is liberty, and Nature law:
 All then is full, possessing and possess'd,
 No craving void left aching in the breast:
 Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
 And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.
 This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be),
 And once the lot of Abelard and me.
 Alas, how changed! what sudden horrors rise!
 A naked lover bound and bleeding lies!
 Where, where was Eloise? her voice, her hand,
 Her poniard had opposed the dire command.
 Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain;
 The crime was common, common be the pain.
 I can no more; by shame, by rage suppress'd,
 Let tears and burning blushes speak the rest.
 Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
 When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
 Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
 When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
 As with cold lips I kiss'd the sacred veil,
 The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
 Heav'n scarce believ'd the conquest it survey'd,
 And saints with wonder heard the vows I made.
 Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,
 Not on the cross my eyes were fix'd, but you:
 Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
 And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.

Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve
my woe; 119

Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie,
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd;
Give all thou caust — and let me dream the
rest.

Ah, no! instruct me other joys to prize,
With other beauties charm my partial eyes!
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit Abelard for God.

Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy
care,

Plants of thy hand, and children of thy
prayer. 130

From the false world in early youth they
fled,

By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.
You raised these hallow'd walls; the desert
smil'd,

And Paradise was open'd in the wild.

No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate or emblaze the floors;
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here bribed the rage of ill-requited Heav'n;
But such plain roofs as piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise. 140

In these lone walls (their day's eternal
bound),

These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets
crown'd,

Where awful arches make a noontide night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light,
Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray,
And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day.
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.
See how the force of others' prayers I try,
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!) 150

But why should I on others' prayers de-
pend?

Come thou, my father, brother, husband,
friend!

Ah, let thy handmaid, sister, daughter,
move,

And all those tender names in one, thy
love!

The darksome pines, that o'er yon rocks
reclin'd,

Wave high, and murmur to the hollow
wind,

The wand'ring streams that shine between
the hills,

The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,

The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling
breeze — 160

No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid:

But o'er the twilight groves and dusky
caves,

Long-sounding aisles and intermingled
graves,

Black Melancholy sits, and round her
throws

A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,

Shades every flower, and darkens every
green,

Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the
woods. 170

Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!

Death, only Death can break the lasting
chain;

And here, ev'n then shall my cold dust re-
main;

Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 't is no sin to mix with thine.

Ah, wretch! believ'd the spouse of God
in vain,

Confess'd within the slave of Love and man.
Assist me, Heav'n! but whence arose that
prayer?

Sprung it from piety or from despair? 180

Ev'n here, where frozen Chastity retires,
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.

I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;

I view my crime, but kindle at the view,
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;

Now turn'd to Heav'n, I weep my past
offence,

Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,

'Tis sure the hardest science to forget! 190

How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the
sense.

And love th' offender, yet detest th' of-
fence?

How the dear object from the crime re-
move,

Or how distinguish Penitence from Love?
Unequal task! a passion to resign,

For hearts so touch'd, so pierced, so lost
as mine:

Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!

How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain — do all things but forget!

But let Heav'n seize it, all at once 't is fired;
Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspired!

O come! O teach me Nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself — and You:

Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot;
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;

Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;
Desires composed, affections ever ev'n;
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to Heav'n.

Grace shines around her with serenest beams,

And whispering angels prompt her golden dreams.

For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;

For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring;
For her white virgins hymeneals sing;
To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures of unholy joy.

When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,

Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away,

Then conscience sleeps, and leaving Nature free,

All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee!

Oh earnest, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
Provoking demons all restraint remove,
And stir within me every source of love.

I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,

And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.

I wake: — no more I hear, no more I view,

The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.

I call aloud; it hears not what I say:

I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.

To dream once more I close my willing eyes;

Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
Alas, no more! methinks we wand'ring go
Thro' dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,

Where round some mould'ring tower pale ivy creeps,

And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.

Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies;

Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.

I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,

And wake to all the griefs I left behind.

For thee the Fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain;

Thy life a long dead calm of fix'd repose;
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.

Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,

Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiv'n,
And mild as opening gleams of promised Heav'n.

Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?

The torch of Venns burns not for the dead.
Nature stands check'd; Religion disapproves;

Ev'n thou art cold — yet Eloisa loves.
Ah, hopeless, lasting flames; like those that burn

To light the dead, and warm th' unfruitful urn!

What scenes appear where'er I turn my view;

The dear ideas, where I fly, pursue;
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.

I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me:
Thy voice I seem in every hymn to hear,

With every bead I drop too soft a tear.
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,

And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,

Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:

In seas of flame my plunging soul is
drown'd,
While altars blaze, and angels tremble
round.

While prostrate here in humble grief I
lie,

Kind virtuous drops just gath'ring in my
eye,

While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is opening on my soul:
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou
art! 281

Oppose thyself to Heav'n; dispute my
heart;

Come, with one glance of those deluding
eyes

Blot out each bright idea of the skies;
Take back that grace, those sorrows and
those tears,

Take back my fruitless penitence and
prayers;

Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest
abode:

Assist the fiends, and tear me from my
God!

No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans
roll! 290

Ah, come not, write not, think not once of
me,

Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.

Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;

Forget, renounce me, hate what'er was
mine.

Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I
view),

Long lov'd, ador'd ideas, all adieu!

O Grace serene! O Virtue heav'nly fair!

Divine Oblivion of low-thoughted care!

Fresh blooming Hope, gay daughter of the
sky!

And Faith, our early immortality! 300

Enter each mild, each amicable guest;

Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!

See in her cell sad Eloisa spread,

Propt on some tomb, a neighbour of the
dead.

In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls.
Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow
sound:

'Come, sister, come! (it said, or seem'd to
say)

Thy place is here, sad sister, come away;

Once, like thyself, I trembled, wept, and
pray'd, 311

Love's victim then, tho' now a sainted
maid:

But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to
weep;

Ev'n superstition loses ev'ry fear:

For God, not man, absolves our frailties
here.'

I come, I come! prepare your roseate
bowers,

Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flowers.
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,

Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic
glow; 320

Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of
day:

See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll,
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying
soul!

Ah, no — in sacred vestments mayst thou
stand,

The hallow'd taper trembling in thy hand,
Present the cross before my lifted eye,

Teach me at once, and learn of me, to die.
Ah then, thy once lov'd Eloisa see!

It will be then no crime to gaze on me. 330

See from my cheek the transient roses fly!

See the last sparkle languish in my eye!

Till ev'ry motion, pulse, and breath be o'er,

And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more.

O Death, all-eloquent! you only prove
What dust we doat on, when 't is man we
love.

Then too, when Fate shall thy fair frame
destroy

(That cause of all my guilt, and all my
joy),

In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be
drown'd,

Bright clouds descend, and angels watch
thee round; 340

From opening skies may streaming glories
shine,

And saints embrace thee with a love like
mine.

May one kind grave unite each hapless
name,

And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are
o'er,

When this rebellious heart shall beat no
more;

If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings,
 To Paraclete's white walls and silver
 springs,
 O'er the pale marble shall they join their
 heads,
 And drink the falling tears each other
 sheds; ³⁵⁰
 Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,
 'O may we never love as these have lov'd !'
 From the full choir, when loud hosannas
 rise,
 And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
 Amid that scene if some relenting eye
 Glance on the stone where our cold relics
 lie,

Devotion's self shall steal a thought from
 Heav'n,
 One human tear shall drop, and be forgiv'n.
 And sure if Fate some future bard shall join
 In sad similitude of griefs to mine, ³⁶⁰
 Condemn'd whole years in absence to de-
 plore,
 And image charms he must behold no
 more, —
 Such if there be, who loves so long, so well,
 Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
 The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive
 ghost;
 He best can paint them who shall feel them
 most.

SATIRES

[The *Satires* appeared between 1733 and 1738.]

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

BEING THE PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES

ADVERTISEMENT

This paper is a sort of bill of complaint, begun many years since, and drawn up by snatches, as the several occasions offered. I had no thoughts of publishing it, till it pleased some Persons of Rank and Fortune (the authors of 'Verses to the Imitator of Horace,' and of an 'Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court') to attack, in a very extraordinary manner, not only my Writings (of which, being public, the Public is judge), but my Person, Morals, and Family; whereof, to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite. Being divided between the necessity to say something of myself, and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to this epistle. If it have any thing pleasing, it will be that by which I am most desirous to please, the Truth and the Sentiment; and if any thing offensive, it will be only to those I am least sorry to offend, the vicious or the ungenerous.

Many will know their own pictures in it, there being not a circumstance but what is true; but I have, for the most part, spared their names, and they may escape being laughed at if they please.

I would have some of them know it was owing to the request of the learned and candid Friend to whom it is inscribed, that I make not as free use of theirs as they have done of mine. However, I shall have this advantage

and honour on my side, that whereas, by their proceeding, any abuse may be directed at any man, no injury can possibly be done by mine, since a nameless character can never be found out but by its truth and likeness.

P. 'SHUT, shut the door, good John!'
 fatigued, I said;

'Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm
 dead.'

The Dog-star rages! nay, 't is past a doubt
 All Bedlam or Parnassus is let out:

Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
 They rave, recite, and madden round the
 land.

What walls can guard me, or what shades
 can hide?

They pierce my thickets, thro' my grot they
 glide,

By land, by water, they renew the charge,
 They stop the chariot, and they board the
 barge. ¹⁰

No place is sacred, not the church is free,
 Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to
 me:

Then from the Mint walks forth the man
 of rhyme,

Happy to catch me just at dinner time.

Is there a Parson much bemused in beer,
 A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer,
 A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to
 cross,

Who pens a stanza when he should engross?

Is there who, lock'd from ink and paper,
scrawls

With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd
walls? 20

All fly to TWIT'NAM, and in humble strain
Apply to me to keep them mad or vain,
Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the
cause:

Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses Wit and Poetry, and Pope.

Friend to my life (which did not you
prolong,

The world had wanted many an idle song)!
What Drop or Nostrum can this plague
remove?

Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or
love? 30

A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped;
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me
dead.

Seiz'd and tied down to judge, how wretched
I!

Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.
To laugh were want of goodness and of
grace,

And to be grave exceeds all power of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish and an aching head,
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine
years.' 40

'Nine years!' cries he, who, high in
Drury lane,

Lull'd by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before
Term ends,

Obliged by hunger and request of friends:
'The piece, you think, is incorrect? why,
take it!

I'm all submission: what you'd have it—
make it.'

Three things another's modest wishes
bound,

'My friendship, and a Prologue, and ten
pound.'

Pitholeon sends to me: 'You know his
Grace,

I want a patron; ask him for a place.' 50
Pitholeon libell'd me — 'But here's a
letter

Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no
better.

Dare you refuse him? Cnrll invites to dine,
He'll write a *Journal*, or he'll turn Divine.'

Bless me! a packet. — 'Tis a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse.

If I dislike it, 'Furies, death, and rage!'

If I approve, 'Commeud it to the stage.'

There (thank my stars) my whole commis-
sion ends, 59

The players and I are, luckily, no friends.
Fired that the house rejects him, 'Sdeath,

I'll print it,
And shame the fools — your int'rest, Sir,
with Lintot.'

Lintot, dull rogue, will think your price too
much:

'Not, Sir, if you revise it and retouch.'

All my demurs but double his attacks;

At last he whispers, 'Do, and we go
snacks.'

Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door;

'Sir, let me see your works and you no
more.'

'Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to
spring

(Midas, a sacred person and a king), 70

His very Minister who spied them first

(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak
or burst.

And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my
face?

A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in
dangerous things;

I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or
Kings;

Keep close to ears, and those let asses
prick,

'Tis nothing — P. Nothing! if they bite
and kick?

Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an ass:

The truth once told (and wherefore should
we lie?) 80

The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.

You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.

Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee
break,

Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty
crack:

Pit, Box, and Gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting
world.

Who shames a Scribbler? break one cob-
web thro',

He spins the slight self-pleasing thread
anew: 90

Destroy his fib, or sophistry — in vain!
The creature's at his dirty work again,
Throned in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines.
Whom have I hurt? has Poet yet or Peer
Lost the arch'd eyebrow or Parnassian
sneer?

And has not Colley still his lord and whore?
His butchers Henley? his freemasons
Moore?

Does not one table Bavius still admit?
Still to one Bishop Philips seem a wit? 100
Still Sappho — A. Hold! for God's sake —
you'll offend.

No names — be calm — learn prudence of
a friend.

I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these — P. One flatt'rer's
worse than all.

Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are
right,

It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they re-
pent.

One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes; 110
One from all Grub-street will my fame
defend,

And, more abusive, calls himself my friend:
This prints my *Letters*, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, sub-
scribe!'

There are who to my person pay their
court:

I cough like Horace; and tho' lean, am
short;

Ammon's great son one shoulder had too
high,

Such Ovid's nose, and 'Sir! you have an
eye —'

Go on, obliging creatures! make me see
All that disgraced my betters met in me.
Sav, for my comfort, languishing in bed, 121
'Just so immortal Maro held his head:'

And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer died three thousand years
ago.

Why did I write? what sin to me un-
known

Dipp'd me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came:
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd: 130

The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend,
not wife,
To help me thro' this long disease my life,
To second, ARBUTHNOT! thy art and care,
And teach the being you preserv'd, to bear.

A. But why then publish? P. Granville
the polite,

And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could
write;

Well-natured Garth inflamed with early
praise,

And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endured my
lays;

The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read;
Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the
head, 140

And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend
before)

With open arms receiv'd one poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd I
Happier their author, when by these be-
lov'd!

From these the world will judge of men
and books,

Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and
Cookes.

Soft were my numbers; who could take
offence

While pure description held the place of
sense?

Like gentle Fanny's was my flowery theme,
'A painted mistress, or a purling stream.'
Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill; 151

I wish'd the man a dinner, and sat still:
Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret;

I never answer'd; I was not in debt.
If want provoked, or madness made them
print,

I waged no war with Bedlam or the Mint.
Did some more sober critic come abroad;

If wrong, I smiled, if right, I kiss'd the
rod.

Pains, reading, study, are their just pre-
tence,

And all they want is spirit, taste, and
sense. 160

Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 't were a sin to rob them of their mite.

Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel graced these
ribalds,

From slashing Bentleys down to piddling
Tibbalds.

Each wight who reads not, and but scans
and spells,

Each word-catcher that lives on syllables,

Ev'n such small critics some regard may
claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakspeare's
name.

Pretty ! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or
worms !

The things, we know, are neither rich nor
rare,

But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry : I excused them too ;
Well might they rage, I gave them but
their due.

A man's true merit 't is not hard to find ;
But each man's secret standard in his
mind,

That casting-weight Pride adds to empti-
ness,

This, who can gratify ? for who can guess ?
The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persiau tale for half-a-
crown,

Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains eight
lines a year ;

He who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing
left ;

And he who now to sense, now nonsense,
leaning,

Means not, but blunders round about a
meaning :

And he whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad :
All these my modest satire bade translate,
And own'd that nine such poets made a
Tate.

How did they fume, and stamp, and roar,
and chafe !

And swear not ADDISON himself was safe.
Peace to all such ! but were there one
whose fires

True Genius kindles, and fair Fame in-
spires,

Bless'd with each talent and each art to
please,

And born to write, converse, and live with
ease ;

Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the
throne ;

View him with scornful, yet with jealous
eyes,

And hate for arts that caus'd himself to
rise ;

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil
leer,

And without sneering teach the rest to
sneer ;

Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike ;

Alike reserv'd to blame or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend ;

Dreading ev'n fools ; by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd ;

Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause :

While Wits and Templars ev'ry sentence
raise,

And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh if such a man there be ?

Who would not weep, if Atticus were he ?
What tho' my name stood rubric on the
walls,

Or plaster'd posts, with claps, in capitals ?
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers load,

On wings of winds came flying all abroad ?
I sought no homage from the race that
write ;

I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their
sight :

Poems I heeded (now berhymed so long)
No more than thou, great George ! a birth-
day song.

I ne'er with Wits or Witlings pass'd my
days

To spread about the itch of verse and praise ;
Nor like a puppy daggled thro' the town

To fetch and carry sing-song up and down ;
Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and
cried,

With handkerchief and orange at my side ;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,

To Bufo left the whole Castalian state.

Proud as Apollo on his forked hill
Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill :

Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.

His library (where busts of poets dead,
And a true Pindar stood without a head)

Receiv'd of Wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a
place :

Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his
seat.

And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days
eat :

Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some
with praise ;

To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
 And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
 Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not
 nigh;
 Dryden alone escaped this judging eye:
 But still the great have kindness in re-
 serve;
 He help'd to bury whom he help'd to
 starve.
 May some choice patron bless each gray
 goose quill!
 May every Bavius have his Bufo still! 250
 So when a statesman wants a day's de-
 fence,
 Or Envy holds a whole week's war with
 Sense,
 Or simple Pride for flatt'ry makes de-
 mands,
 May dunce by dunce be whistled off my
 hands!
 Bless'd be the great! for those they take
 away,
 And those they left me — for they left me
 Gay;
 Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
 Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
 Of all thy blameless life the sole return
 My Verse, and Queensb'ry weeping o'er
 thy urn! 260
 Oh let me live my own, and die so too
 (To live and die is all I have to do)!
 Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
 And see what friends, and read what books
 I please;
 Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
 Sometimes to call a minister my Friend.
 I was not born for courts or great affairs;
 I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;
 Can sleep without a poem in my head,
 Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead. 270
 Why am I ask'd what next shall see the
 light?
 Heav'n! was I born for nothing but to
 write?
 Has life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
 Have I no friend to serve, no soul to
 save?
 'I found him close with Swift' — 'Indeed?
 no doubt
 (Cries prating Balbus) something will come
 out.'
 'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will;
 'No, such a genius never can lie still.'
 And then for mine obligingly mistakes 279
 The first lampoon Sir Will or Bubo makes.

Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but
 smile,
 When ev'ry coxcomb knows me by my
 style?
 Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it
 flow,
 That tends to make one worthy man my
 foe,
 Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
 Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear!
 But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's
 peace,
 Insults fall'n Worth, or Beauty in distress,
 Who loves a lie, lame Slander helps about,
 Who writes a libel, or who copies out; 290
 That fop whose pride affects a patron's
 name,
 Yet absent, wounds an author's honest
 fame;
 Who can your merit selfishly approve,
 And show the sense of it without the love;
 Who has the vanity to call you friend,
 Yet wants the honour, injured, to defend;
 Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you
 say,
 And, if he lie not, must at least betray;
 Who to the Dean and Silver Bell can
 swear, 299
 And sees at Canons what was never there;
 Who reads but with a lust to misapply,
 Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie:
 A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
 But all such babbling blockheads in his
 stead.
 Let Sporus tremble — A. What? that
 thing of silk,
 Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's
 milk?
 Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
 P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded
 wings,
 This painted child of dirt, that stinks and
 stings; 310
 Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
 Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er en-
 joys;
 So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
 In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
 Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the
 way,
 Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
 And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet
 squeaks,

Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself
abroad, 320

In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphem-
ies;

His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now
miss,

And he himself one vile Antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have ex-
prest, 330

A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none
will trust,

Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks
the dust.

Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's
fool,

Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,
Not proud nor servile;—be one poet's
praise,

That if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by many ways:
That flatt'ry ev'n to Kings, he held a
shame,

And thought a lie in verse or prose the
same; 339

That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moralized his
song;

That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the
mad;

The distant threats of vengeance on his
head,

The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed; 349
The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash and dulness not his own;
The morals blacken'd when the writings
'scape,

The libell'd person, and the pictured shape;
Abuse on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead;
The whisper, that, to greatness still too
near,

Perhaps yet vibrates on his SOV'REIGN'S
ear—

Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the
past:

For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the
last!

A. But why insult the poor? affront the
great? 350

P. A knave's a knave to me in ev'ry state;
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail;
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire;
If on a Pillory, or near a Throne,
He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than
wit,

Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:
This dreaded Satirist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his dis-
tress: 351

So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's
door,

Has drunk with Cibber, nay, has rhymed
for Moore.

Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Wel-
sted's lie.

To please a mistress one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife:
Let Budgell charge low Grub-street on his
quill,

And write whate'er he pleased, except his
will; 352

Let the two Curlls of town and court abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and muse:
Yet why? that father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbour fool;
That harmless mother thought no wife a
whore:

Hear this, and spare his family, James
Moore!

Unspotted names, and memorable long,
If there be force in Virtue, or in Song.

Of gentle blood (part shed in honour's
cause,

While yet in Britain honour had applause)
Each parent sprung—A. What fortune,
pray?—

P. Their own; 353

And better got than Bestia's from the
throne.

Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his
age.

No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle
art,

No language but the language of the heart.
By Nature honest, by Experience wise, 400
Healthy by Temp'rance and by Exercise;
His life, tho' long, to sickness pass'd un-
known,

His death was instant and without a groan.
O grant me thus to live, and thus to die !
Who spring from kings shall know less
joy than I.

O friend ! may each domestic bliss be
thine !

Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage
To rock the cradle of reposing Age, 409
With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath,
Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed
of Death;

Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the
sky !

On cares like these if length of days at-
tend,

May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve
my friend !

Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a
Queen.

A. Whether that blessing be denied or
giv'n,

Thus far was right ; — the rest belongs to
Heav'n.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE SECOND BOOK OF HORACE

The identification of Augustus with George II. makes it necessary to take much of this poem ironically. George II., since his accession ten years before this was written (1737), had shown absolute indifference to the literature of England. The critical portions of the satire undoubtedly present Pope's real judgment of contemporary literature.

ADVERTISEMENT

The reflections of Horace, and the judgments passed in his Epistle to Augustus, seemed so reasonable to the present times, that I could not help applying them to the use of my own country. The author thought them considerable enough to address them to his prince, whom he paints with all the great and good qualities of a monarch upon whom the Romans depended

for the increase of an absolute Empire ; but to make the poem entirely English, I was willing to add one or two of those which contribute to the happiness of a Free People, and are more consistent with the welfare of our neighbours.

This epistle will show the learned world to have fallen into two mistakes : one, that Augustus was a Patron of poets in general ; whereas he not only prohibited all but the best writers to name him, but recommended that care even to the civil magistrate ; *Admonebat prætore, ne paterentur nomen suum obsoleferi, &c.* ; the other, that this piece was only a general Discourse of Poetry ; whereas it was an Apology for the Poets, in order to render Augustus more their patron. Horace here pleads the cause of his contemporaries ; first, against the Taste of the town, whose humour it was to magnify the authors of the preceding age ; secondly, against the Court and Nobility, who encouraged only the writers for the Theatre ; and, lastly, against the Emperor himself, who had conceived them of little use to the Government. He shows (by a view of the progress of Learning, and the change of Taste among the Romans) that the introduction of the Polite Arts of Greece had given the writers of his time great advantages over their predecessors ; that their Morals were much improved, and the license of those ancient poets restrained ; that Satire and Comedy were become more just and useful ; that whatever extravagancies were left on the stage were owing to the ill taste of the nobility ; that poets, under due regulations, were in many respects useful to the State ; and concludes, that it was upon them the Emperor himself must depend for his Fame with posterity.

We may further learn from this Epistle, that Horace made his court to this great Prince, by writing with a decent freedom toward him, with a just contempt of his low flatterers, and with a manly regard to his own character.

TO AUGUSTUS

WHILE you, great Patron of Mankind !
sustain

The balanced world, and open all the main ;
Your country, chief, in Arms abroad de-
fend,

At home with Morals, Arts, and Laws
amend ;

How shall the Muse, from such a monarch,
steal

An hour, and not defraud the public weal ?
Edward and Henry, now the boast of
Fame,

And virtuous Alfred, a more sacred name,
After a life of gen'rous toils endured, —
The Gaul subdued, or property secured, 10
Ambition humbled, mighty cities storm'd,
Or laws establish'd, and the world re-
form'd —

Closed their long glories with a sigh, to
find

Th' unwilling gratitude of base Mankind !
All human Virtue, to its latest breath,
Finds Envy never conquer'd but by Death.
The great Alcides, ev'ry labour past,
Had still this monster to subdue at last :
Sure fate of all, beneath whose rising ray
Each star of meaner merit fades away !
Oppress'd we feel the beam directly beat ;
Those suns of glory please not till they set.

To thee the World its present homage
pays,

The harvest early, but mature the praise :
Great friend of Liberty ! in Kings a name
Above all Greek, above all Roman fame ;
Whose word is truth, as sacred and revered
As Heav'n's own oracles from altars heard.
Wonder of Kings ! like whom to mortal
eyes

None e'er has risen, and none e'er shall
rise.

Just in one instance, be it yet confest
Your people, sir, are partial in the rest ;
Foes to all living worth except your own,
And advocates for folly dead and gone.
Authors, like coins, grow dear as they grow
old ;

It is the Rust we value, not the Gold.
Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learn'd by rote,
And beastly Skelton heads of houses quote ;
One likes no language but the Faery Queen ;
A Scot will fight for Christ's Kirk o' the
Green ;

And each true Briton is to Ben so civil,
He swears the Muses met him at the Devil.
Tho' justly Greece her eldest sons admires,
Why should not we be wiser than our sires ?
In every public virtue we excel,
We build, we paint, we sing, we dance, as
well ;

And learned Athens to our art must stoop,
Could she behold us tumbling thro' a hoop.

If time improve our Wit as well as Wine,
Say at what age a poet grows divine ?
Shall we, or shall we not, account him so
Who died, perhaps, a hundred years ago ?
End all dispute : and fix the year precise
When British bards begin t' immortalize ?

'Who lasts a century can have no flaw ;
I hold that Wit a classic, good in law.'

Suppose he wants a year, will you com-
pound ?

And shall we deem him ancient, right, and
sound,

Or damn to all eternity at once
At ninety-nine a modern and a dunce ?
'We shall not quarrel for a year or two ;
By courtesy of England he may do.'

Then by the rule that made the horsetail
bare,

I pluck out year by year, as hair by hair,
And melt down Ancients like a heap of
snow,

While you, to measure merits, look in
Stowe,

And estimating authors by the year,
Bestow a garland only on a bier.

Shakespeare (whom you and every play-
house bill

Style the divine ! the matchless ! what you
will)

For Gain, not Glory, wing'd his roving
flight,

And grew immortal in his own despite.

Ben, old and poor, as little seem'd to heed
The life to come in every poet's creed.

Who now reads Cowley ? if he pleases yet,
His Moral pleases, not his pointed Wit :

Forgot his Epic, nay, Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart.

'Yet surely, surely these were famous
men !

What boy but hears the sayings of old Ben ?
In all debates where Critics bear a part, so

Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's
Art,

Of Shakespeare's Nature, and of Cowley's
Wit ;

How Beaumont's judgment check'd what
Fletcher writ ;

How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow ;
But for the passions, Southern sure, and
Rowe !

These, only these, support the crowded
stage,

From eldest Heywood down to Cibber's
age.'

All this may be ; the People's voice is odd ;
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.

To Gammer Gurton if it give the bays,
And yet deny the Careless Husband praise,

Or say our fathers never broke a rule ;
Why then, I say, the Public is a fool.

But let them own that greater faults than
we

They had, and greater virtues, I'll agree.
Spenser himself affects the obsolete,
And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman
feet ;

Milton's strong pinion now not Heav'n can bound,

Now, serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground. 100

In quibbles Angel and Archangel join,
And God the Father turns a School-divine.
Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
Like slashing Bentley with his desp'rate hook;

Or damn all Shakespeare, like th' affected fool

At Court, who hates whate'er he read at School.

But turn the Wits of either Charles's days,
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease;

Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more
(Like twinkling stars the Miscellanies o'er), 110

One simile that solitary shines
In the dry Desert of a thousand lines,
Or lengthen'd thought, that gleams thro' many a page,

Has sanctified whole poems for an age.
I lose my patience, and I own it too,
When works are censured not as bad, but new;

While, if our elders break all Reason's laws,
These fools demand not pardon, but applause.

On Avon's bank, where flowers eternal blow,

If I but ask if any weed can grow, 120
One tragic sentence if I dare deride,
Which Betterton's grave action dignified,
Or well-mouth'd Booth with emphasis proclaims,

(Tho' but perhaps a muster-roll of names),
How will our fathers rise up in a rage,
And swear all shame is lost in GEORGE's age!

You'd think no fools disgraced the former reign,

Did not some grave examples yet remain,
Who scorn a lad should teach his father skill,

And having once been wrong, will be so still. 130

He who, to seem more deep than you or I,
Extols old bards, or Merlin's prophecy,
Mistake him not; he envies, not admires,
And to debase the sons exalts the sires.
Had ancient times conspired to disallow
What then was new, what had been ancient now?

Or what remain'd, so worthy to be read
By learned critics of the mighty dead?

In days of ease, when now the weary sword

Was sheath'd, and luxury with Charles restor'd, 140

In every taste of foreign courts improv'd,
'All by the King's example liv'd and lov'd,'
Then peers grew proud in horsemanship t' excel;

Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell;
The soldier breathed the gallantries of France,

And ev'ry flowery Courtier writ Romance.
Then marble, soften'd into life, grew warm,
And yielding metal flow'd to human form;
Lely on animated canvas stole

The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul. 150

No wonder then, when all was love and sport,

The willing Muses were debauch'd at court;

On each enervate string they taught the note

To pant, or tremble thro' a Eunuch's throat.
But Britain, changeful as a child at play,
Now calls in princes, and now turns away.

Now Whig, now Tory, what we loved we hate;

Now all for Pleasure, now for Church and State;

Now for Prerogatives, and now for laws;
Effects unhappy, from a noble cause. 160

Time was, a sober Englishman would knock

His servants up, and rise by five o'clock;

Instruct his family in ev'ry rule,
And send his wife to church, his son to school.

To worship like his fathers was his care;

To teach their frugal virtues to his heir;

To prove that Luxury could never hold,

And place on good security his gold.

Now times are changed, and one poetic itch
Has seized the Court and City, Poor and Rich; 170

Sons, sires, and grandsires, all will wear the bays;

Our wives read Milton, and our daughters plays;

To theatres and to rehearsals throng,

And all our grace at table is a song.

I, who so oft renounce the Muses, lie:

Not **s self e'er tells more fibs than I.

When sick of Muse, our follies we deplore,
And promise our best friends to rhyme no
more,

We wake next morning in a raging fit,
And call for pen and ink to show our wit.

He served a 'prenticeship who sets up
shop; ¹⁸¹

Ward tried on puppies and the poor his
drop;

Ev'n Radcliff's doctors travel first to
France,

Nor dare to practise till they've learn'd to
dance.

Who builds a bridge that never drove a
pile?

(Should Ripley venture, all the world would
smile),

But those who cannot write, and those who
can,

All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a
man.

Yet, Sir, reflect; the mischief is not
great;

These madmen never hurt the Church or
State: ¹⁹⁰

Sometimes the folly benefits mankind,
And rarely a vice taints the tuneful mind.

Allow him but his plaything of a Pen,
He ne'er rebels, or plots, like other men:

Flight of cashiers, or mobs, he'll never
mind,

And knows no losses while the Muse is
kind.

To cheat a friend or ward, he leaves to
Peter;

The good man heaps up nothing but mere
metre,

Enjoys his Garden and his Book in quiet;
And then — a perfect hermit in his diet. ²⁰⁰

Of little use the man you may suppose

Who says in verse what others say in
prose;

Yet let me show a Poet's of some eight,
And (tho' no soldier) useful to the State.

What will a child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a foreigner the tongue —

What's long or short, each accent where
to place,

And speak in public with some sort of
grace?

I scarce can think him such a worthless
thing, ²⁰⁹

Unless he praise some monster of a King;
Or virtue or religion turn to sport,

To please a lewd or unbelieving Court.

Unhappy Druden! — In all Charles's days
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays;
And in our own (excuse some courtly
stains)

No whiter page than Addison remains.

He from the taste obscene reclaims our
youth,

And sets the passions on the side of Truth,
Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest

Art, ²¹⁹

And pours each human virtue in the heart.

Let Ireland tell how wit upheld her cause,

Her trade supported, and supplied her laws;

And leave on Swift this grateful verse en-
graved,

'The rights a Court attack'd, a Poet saved.'
Behold the hand that wrought a Nation's

cure,

Stretch'd to relieve the idiot and the poor;

Proud vice to brand, or injured worth adorn,

And stretch the ray to ages yet unborn.

Not but there are, who merit other palms;

Hopkins and Sternhold glad the heart with

psalms; ²²⁰

The boys and girls whom charity main-
tains

Implore your help in these pathetic strains:

How could Devotion touch the country

pews

Unless the Gods bestow'd a proper Muse?

Verse cheers their leisure, verse assists

their work,

Verse prays for peace, or sings down pope

and Turk.

The silenced preacher yields to potent

strain,

And feels that Grace his prayer besought

in vain;

The blessing thrills thro' all the lab'ring

throng,

And Heav'n is won by violence of song. ²²⁸

Our rural ancestors, with little blest,

Patient of labour when the end was rest,

Indulged the day that housed their annual

grain

With feasts, and off'rings, and a thankful

strain.

The joy their wives, their sons, and ser-

vants share,

Ease of their toil, and partners of their

care:

The Laugh, the Jest, attendants on the

bowl,

Smooth'd ev'ry brow, and open'd ev'ry

soul:

With growing years the pleasing license
 grew,
 And taunts alternate innocently flew. 250
 But Times corrupt, and Nature, ill inclin'd,
 Produced the point that left a sting be-
 hind;
 Till friend with friend, and families at
 strife,
 Triumphant malice rag'd thro' private life.
 Who felt the wrong, or fear'd it, took th'
 alarm,
 Appeal'd to law, and Justice lent her arm.
 At length by wholesome dread of statutes
 bound,
 The poets learn'd to please, and not to
 wound:
 Most warp'd to Flatt'ry's side; but some,
 more nice,
 Preserv'd the freedom, and forbore the
 vice. 260
 Hence Satire rose, that just the medium hit,
 And heals with morals what it hurts with
 wit.
 We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's
 charms,
 Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our
 arms;
 Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
 Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to
 flow.
 Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught
 to join
 The varying verse, the full resounding
 line,
 The long majestic march, and energy di-
 vine:
 Tho' still some traces of our rustic vein 270
 And splay-foot verse remain'd, and will re-
 main.
 Late, very late, correctness grew our care,
 When the tired nation breathed from civil
 war.
 Exact Racine and Corneille's noble fire
 Show'd us that France had something to
 admire.
 Not but the tragic spirit was our own,
 And full in Shakespeare, fair in Otway,
 shone;
 But Otway fail'd to polish or refine,
 And fluent Shakespeare scarce effaced a
 line.
 Ev'n copious Dryden wanted, or forgot. 280
 The last and greatest art — the art to blot.
 Some doubt if equal pains or equal fire
 The humbler Muse of Comedy require.

But in known images of life I guess
 The labour greater, as th' indulgence less.
 Observe how seldom ev'n the best succeed:
 Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools in-
 deed?
 What pert low dialogue has Farquhar writ!
 How Van wants grace, who never wanted
 wit:
 The stage how loosely does Astrea tread,
 Who fairly puts all characters to bed! 291
 And idle Cibber, how he breaks the laws,
 To make poor Pinkey eat with vast ap-
 plause!
 But fill their purse, our poet's work is
 done,
 Alike to them by pathos or by pun.
 O you! whom Vanity's light bark con-
 veys
 On Fame's mad voyage by the wind of
 praise,
 With what a shifting gale your course you
 ply,
 For ever sunk too low, or borne too high.
 Who pants for glory finds but short repose;
 A breath revives him, or a breath o'er-
 throws. 301
 Farewell the Stage! if just as thrives the
 play
 The silly bard grows fat or falls away.
 There still remains, to mortify a Wit,
 The many-headed monster of the pit;
 A senseless, worthless, and unhonour'd
 crowd,
 Who, to disturb their betters, mighty
 proud,
 Clatt'ring their sticks before ten lines are
 spoke,
 Call for the Faroe, the Bear, or the Black-
 joke. 309
 What dear delight to Britons faroe affords!
 Ever the taste of Mobs, but now of Lords:
 (Taste! that eternal wanderer, which flies
 From heads to ears, and now from ears to
 eves)
 The play stands still; damn action and dis-
 course!
 Back fly the scenes, and enter foot and
 horse;
 Pageants on pageants, in long order drawn,
 Peers, heralds, bishops, ermine, gold, and
 lawn;
 The Champion too! and, to complete the
 jest,
 Old Edward's armour beams on Cibber's
 breast. 319

With laughter sure Democritus had died,
 Had he beheld an audience gape so wide.
 Let bear or elephant be e'er so white,
 The people sure, the people are the sight !
 Ah, luckless Poet ! stretch thy lungs and
 roar,

That bear or elephant shall heed thee more ;
 While all its throats the gallery extends,
 And all the thunder of the pit ascends !
 Loud as the wolves on Orcas' stormy steep
 Howl to the roarings of the northern deep,
 Such is the shout, the long applauding
 note, 330

At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petti-
 coat ;

Or when from court a birthday suit be-
 stow'd,

Sinks the lost actor in the tawdry load.

Booth enters — hark ! the universal peal !

'But has he spoken ?' — Not a syllable.

'What shook the stage, and made the peo-
 ple stare ?'

Cato's long wig, flower'd gown, and lack-
 er'd chair.

Yes, lest you think I rally more than
 teach,

Or praise malignly arts I cannot reach,
 Let me for once presume t' instruct the
 times, 340

To know the Poet from the man of rhymes :
 'Tis he who gives my breast a thousand
 pains,

Can make me feel each passion that he
 feigns,

Enrage, compose, with more than magic art,
 With pity and with terror tear my heart,
 And snatch me o'er the earth, or thro' the
 air,

To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and
 where.

But not this part of the poetic state

Alone deserves the favour of the great.

Think of those authors, Sir, who would
 rely 350

More on a reader's sense than gazer's eye.

Or who shall wander where the Muses sing ?

Who climb their mountain, or who taste
 their spring ?

How shall we fill a library with Wit,
 When Merlin's Cave is half unfurnish'd
 yet ?

My liegel why writers little claim your
 thought

I guess, and, with their leave, will tell the
 fault.

We Poets are (upon a poet's word)

Of all mankind the creatures most absurd !
 The season when to come, and when to go,
 To sing, or cease to sing, we never know ;
 And if we will recite nine hours in ten, 360
 You lose your patience just like other
 men.

Then, too, we hurt ourselves when, to de-
 fend

A single verse, we quarrel with a friend ;
 Repeat, unask'd ; lament, the wit's too fine
 For vulgar eyes, and point out every line :
 But most when straining with too weak a
 wing

We needs will write epistles to the King ;
 And from the moment we oblige the town,
 Expect a Place or Pension from the Crown ;
 Or dubb'd historians by express command,
 T' enrol your triumphs o'er the seas and
 land, 373

Be call'd to Court to plan some work di-
 vine,

As once for Louis, Boileau and Racine.

Yet think, great Sir ! (so many virtues
 shown)

Ah ! think what poet best may make them
 known ;

Or choose at least some minister of grace,
 Fit to bestow the Laureate's weighty place.

Charles, to late times to be transmitted
 fair, 380

Assign'd his figure to Bernini's care ;

And great Nassau to Kneller's hand de-
 creed

To fix him graceful on the bounding steed :
 So well in paint and stone they judg'd of
 merit ;

But Kings in Wit may want discerning
 spirit.

The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
 One knighted Blackmore, and one pension'd

Quarles,

Which made old Ben and surly Dennis
 swear

'No Lord's anointed, but a Russian bear.'

Not with such majesty, such bold relief,

The forms august of King, or conqueror
 Chief, 39

E'er swell'd on marble, as in verse hav
 shined

(In polish'd verse) the manners and the
 mind.

O ! could I mount on the Mæonian wing,
 Your arms, your actions, your repose, to
 sing !

What seas you travers'd, and what fields
you fought!

Your country's peace how oft, how dearly
bought!

How barb'rous rage subsided at your word,
And nations wonder'd while they dropp'd
the sword!

How, when you nodded, o'er the land and
deep, ⁴⁰⁰

Peace stole her wing, and wrapt the world
in sleep,

Till earth's extremes your mediation own,
And Asia's tyrants tremble at your throne!

But verse, alas! your Majesty disdain;

And I'm not used to panegyric strains.

The zeal of fools offends at any time,

But most of all the zeal of fools in rhyme.

Besides, a Fate attends on all I write,
That when I aim at praise they say I
bite.

A vile encomium doubly ridicules: ⁴¹⁰
There's nothing blackens like the ink of
fools.

If true, a woful likeness; and, if lies,
'Praise undeserv'd is scandal in disguise.'
Well may he blush who gives it, or re-
ceives;

And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves
(Like Journals, Odes, and such forgotten
things,

As Eusden, Philips, Settle, writ of Kings)
Clothe spice, line trunk, or, flutt'ring in a
row,

Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Soho.

WILLIAM COLLINS

ODE TO SIMPLICITY

[Publ. 1747]

O THOU, by Nature taught,
To breathe her genuine thought,
In numbers warmly pure, and sweetly
strong;
Who first, on mountains wild,
In Fancy, loveliest child,
Thy babe, or Pleasure's, nursed the powers
of song!

Thou, who, with hermit heart,
Disdain'st the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trail-
ing pall;
But comest a decent maid, 20
In attic robe array'd,
O chaste, unboastful Nymph, to thee I call!

By all the honey'd store
On Hybla's thymy shore;
By all her blooms, and mingled murmurs
dear;
By her¹ whose lovelorn woe,
In evening musings slow,
Soothed sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear:

By old Cephissus deep,
Who spread his wavy sweep, 20
In warbled wanderings, round thy green
retreat;
On whose enamel'd side,
When holy Freedom died,
No equal haunt allured thy future feet.

O sister meek of Truth,
To my admiring youth,
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse!
The flowers that sweetest breathe,
Though Beauty cull'd the wreath, 20
Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues.

While Rome could none esteem
But virtue's patriot theme,
You loved her hills, and led her laureat
band:

¹ The *nightingale*, or *nightingale*.

But staid to sing alone
To one distinguish'd throne;
And turn'd thy face, and fled her alter'd land

No more, in hall or bower,
The Passion's own thy power;
Love, only Love her forceless numbers
mean:
For thou hast left her shrine;
Nor olive more, nor vine,
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

Though taste, though genius, bless
To some divine excess,
Faints the cold work till thou inspire the
whole;
What each, what all supply,
May court, may charm, our eye;
Thou, only thou, canst raise the meeting
soul!

Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task, 20
I only seek to find thy temperate vale;
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale.

ODE

WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE
YEAR 1746

[Publ. 1747]

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes bless'd!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall a while repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

ODE TO LIBERTY

[Publ. 1747]

STROPHE

WHO shall awake the Spartan fire,
 And call in solemn sounds to life,
 The youths, whose locks divinely spreading,
 Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,
 At once the breath of fear and virtues shedding,
 Applauding Freedom loved of old to view?
 What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,
 Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
 At Wisdom's shrine awhile its flame con-
 cealing,

(What place so fit to seal a deed renown'd?)
 Till she her brightest lightnings round
 revealing,

It leap'd in glory forth, and dealt her
 prompted wound!

O goddess, in that feeling hour,
 When most its sounds would court
 thy ears,

Let not my shell's misguided power
 E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.

No, Freedom, no, I will not tell
 How Rome, before thy weeping face,
 With heaviest sound, a giant-statue, fell,
 Push'd by a wild and artless race
 From off its wide ambitious base,
 When Time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
 And all the blended work of strength
 and grace,

With many a rude repeated stroke,
 And many a barbarous yell, to thousand
 fragments broke.

EPODE.

Yet, even where'er the least appear'd,
 The admiring world thy hand revered;
 Still 'midst the scatter'd states around,
 Some remnants of her strength were found;
 They saw, by what escaped the storm,
 How wondrous rose her perfect form;
 How in the great, the labour'd whole,
 Each mighty master pour'd his soul!
 For sunny Florence, seat of art,
 Beneath her vines preserved a part,
 Till they,¹ whom Science loved to name,
 (O who could fear it?) quench'd her flame.
 And lo, an humbler relic laid
 In jealous Pisa's olive shade!
 See small Marino² joins the theme
 Though least, not last in thy esteem:

¹ The Medici.² San Marino.

Strike, louder strike the ennobling strings
 To those,¹ whose merchant sons were kings;
 To him,² who, deck'd with pearly pride,
 In Adria weds his green-hair'd bride;
 Hail, port of glory, wealth, and pleasure,
 Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure:
 Nor e'er her former pride relate,
 To sad Liguria's³ bleeding state.
 Ah no! more pleased thy haunts I seek,
 On wild Helvetia's⁴ mountains bleak:
 (Where, when the favour'd of thy choice,
 The daring archer heard thy voice;
 Forth from his eyrie roused in dread,
 The ravening eagle northward fled):
 Or dwell in willow'd meads more near,
 With those to whom thy stork is dear:
 Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,
 Whose crown a British queen refused!
 The magic works, thou feel'st the strains,
 One holier name alone remains;
 The perfect spell shall then avail,
 Hail, nymph, adored by Britain, hail!

ANTISTROPHE

Beyond the measure vast of thought,
 'The works the wizard Time has wrought!
 'The Gaul, 'tis held of antique story,
 Saw Britain linked to his now adverse strand,
 No sea between, nor cliff sublime and hoary,
 He pass'd with unwet feet through all our land.
 'To the blown Baltic then, they say,
 The wild waves found another way,
 Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains
 rounding;
 Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise.
 A wide wild storm even nature's self con-
 founding,

Withering her giant sons with strange un-
 couth surprise.

This pillar'd earth so firm and wide,
 By winds and inward labours torn,
 In thunders dread was push'd aside,
 And down the shouldering billows
 borne.

And see, like gems, her laughing train,
 The little isles on every side,
 Mona, once hid from those who search the
 main,

Where thousand elfin shapes abide,
 And Wight who checks the westering tide,
 For thee consenting heaven has each be-
 stow'd,
 A fair attendant on her sovereign pride:

¹ The Venetians.² The Doge of Venice.³ Genoa.⁴ Switzerland.

To thee this blest divorce she owed,
For thou hast made her vales thy loved, thy
last abode!

SECOND EPODE

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary pile,
'Midst the green navel of our isle, 90
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul-enforcing goddess, stood!
There oft the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet:
Though now with hopeless toil we trace
Time's backward rolls, to find its place;
Whether the fiery-tressed Dane,
Or Roman's self o'erturn'd the fane,
Or in what heaven-left age it fell, 100
'Twere hard for modern song to tell.
Yet still, if Truth those beams infuse,
Which guide at once, and charm the Muse,
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,
Paving the light embroider'd sky,
Amidst the bright pavilion'd plains,
The beauteous model still remains.
There, happier than in islands blest,
Or bowers by spring or Hebe drest,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory, 110
Here their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to the immortal string.

How may the poet now unfold
What never tongue or numbers told?
How learn delighted, and amazed,
What hands unknown that fabric raised?
Even now before his favour'd eyes,
In gothic pride, it seems to rise!
Yet Græcia's graceful orders join,
Majestic through the mix'd design: 120
The secret builder knew to choose
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues
Whate'er heaven's purer mould contains,
When nearer suns emblaze its veins
There on the walls the patriot's sight
May ever hang with fresh delight,
And, graved with some prophetic rage,
Read Albion's fame through every age.

Ye forms divine, ye laureat band,
That near her inmost altar stand! 130
Now soothe her to her blissful train
Blithe Concord's social form to gain:
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even Anger's blood-hot eyes in sleep;
Before whose breathing bosom's balm
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm:
Her let our sires and matrons hear
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore;

Our youths, enamour'd of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair, 140
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around,
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, lady — thou shalt rule the west!

ODE TO A LADY

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL ROSS, IN
THE ACTION OF FONTENOY. WRITTEN
IN MAY, 1745

[Publ. 1747]

WHILE, lost to all his former mirth,
Britannia's genius bends to earth,
And mourns the fatal day:
While stain'd with blood he strives to tear
Unseemly from his sea-green hair
The wreaths of cheerful May:

The thoughts which musing Pity pays,
And fond Remembrance loves to raise,
Your faithful hours attend;
Still Fancy, to herself unkind, 15
Awakes to grief the soften'd mind,
And points the bleeding friend.

By rapid Scheld's descending wave
His country's vows shall bless the grave,
Where'er the youth is laid:
That sacred spot the village hind
With every sweetest turf shall bind,
And Peace protect the shade.

Blest youth, regardful of thy doom,
Ærial hands shall build thy tomb, 20
With shadowy trophies crown'd;
Whilst Honour bathed in tears shall rove
To sigh thy name through every grove,
And call his heroes round.

The warlike dead of every age,
Who fill the fair recording page,
Shall leave their sainted rest;
And, half reclining on his spear,
Each wondering chief by turns appear,
To hail the blooming guest: 25

Old Edward's sons, unknown to yield,
Shall crowd from Cressy's laurel'd field,
And gaze with fix'd delight;
Again for Britain's wrongs they feel,
Again they snatch the gleamy steel,
And wish the avenging fight.

But lo, where, sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare
Impatient Freedom lies !
Her matted tresses madly spread, 40
To every sod, which wraps the dead,
She turns her joyless eyes.

Ne'er shall she leave that lowly ground
Till notes of triumph bursting round
Proclaim her reign restored:
Till William seek the sad retreat,
And, bleeding at her sacred feet,
Present the sated sword.

If, weak to soothe so soft a heart,
These pictured glories nought impart, 50
To dry thy constant tear:
If yet, in Sorrow's distant eye,
Exposed and pale thou see'st him lie,
Wild War insulting near:

Where'er from time thou court'st relief,
The Muse shall still, with social grief,
Her gentlest promise keep;
Even humbled Harting's cottaged vale
Shall learn the sad repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep.

ODE TO EVENING

[Publ. 1747]

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest
ear,
Like thy own brawling springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales;

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-
hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-
eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern
wing; 40
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy dark-
ening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit;
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return ! 20

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her
brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier
still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy
scene;
Or find some ruin, 'midst its dreary dells, 30
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.

Or, if chill blustering winds, or driving
rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd
spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er
all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil. 40

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft
he wont,
And ba'he thy breathing tresses, meekest
Eve !
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with
leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling
Peace, 50
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favourite name !

ODE TO PEACE

[Publ. 1747]

O THOU, who bad'st thy turtles bear
 Swift from his grasp thy golden hair,
 And sought'st thy native skies;
 When War, by vultures drawn from far,
 To Britain bent his iron car,
 And bade his storms arise!

Tired of his rude tyrannic sway,
 Our youth shall fix some festive day,
 His sullen shrines to burn:
 But thou who hear'st the turning spheres, 10
 What sounds may charm thy partial ears,
 And gain thy blest return!

O Peace, thy injured robes up-bind!
 O rise! and leave not one behind
 Of all thy beamy train;
 The British Lion, goddess sweet,
 Lies stretch'd on earth to kiss thy feet,
 And own thy holier reign.

Let others court thy transient smile,
 But come to grace thy western isle, 20
 By warlike Honour led;
 And, while around her ports rejoice,
 While all her sons adore thy choice,
 With him for ever wed!

THE PASSIONS

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

WHEN music, heavenly maid, was young,
 While yet in early Greece she sung,
 The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
 Throng'd around her magic cell,
 Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
 Posset beyond the Muse's painting:
 By turns they felt the glowing mind
 Disturb'd, delighted, raised, refined;
 Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired, 10
 Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspired,
 From the supporting myrtles round
 They snatch'd her instruments of sound;
 And, as they oft had heard apart
 Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
 Each (for Madness ruled the hour)
 Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
 Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,

And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
 E'en at the sound himself had made. 20
 Next Anger rush'd; his eyes on fire,
 In lightnings own'd his secret stings;
 In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
 And swept with hurried hand the string
 With woful measures wan Despair
 Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
 A solemn, strange, and mingled air
 'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
 What was thy delighted measure? 30
 Still it whisper'd promised pleasure,
 And bade the lovely scenes at distance
 hail!
 Still would her touch the strain prolong:
 And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
 She call'd on Echo still, through all the
 song;

And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
 A soft responsive voice was heard at
 every close,
 And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved
 her golden hair.
 And longer had she sung;—but, with a
 frown,

Revenge impatient rose; 40
 He threw his blood-stain'd sword, in thun-
 der, down;

And with a withering look,
 The war-denouncing trumpet took,
 And blew a blast so loud and dread,
 Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe:
 And, ever and anon, he beat
 The doubling drum, with furious heat;
 And though sometimes, each dreary pause
 between,

Dejected Pity, at his side,
 Her soul-subduing voice applied, 50
 Yet still he kept his wild unalter'd mien.
 While each strain'd ball of sight seem'd
 bursting from his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were
 fix'd;
 Sad proof of thy distressful state;
 Of differing themes the veering song was
 mix'd;
 And now it courted Love, now raving
 call'd on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
 Pale Melancholy sate retired;
 And, from her wild sequester'd seat,
 In notes by distance made more sweet, 60

Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul:

And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,

Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of Peace, and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But O! how alter'd was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,

Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,

The hunter's call, to Faun and Dryad known!

The oak-crown'd Sisters, and their chaste-eyed Queen,

Satyrs and Sylvan Boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green:
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand address;
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best;

They would have thought who heard the strain

They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,

Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings,
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round:

Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;

And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid!
Why, goddess! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As, in that loved Athenian bower,
You learn'd an all commanding power,

Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endear'd,
Can well recall what then it heard;
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording Sister's page —
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age;
E'en all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound —
O bid our vain endeavours cease;
Revive the just designs of Greece:
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND ARVIRAGUS
OVER FIDELE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

[Publ. 1747]

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village linds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rife all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen;
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell;

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead.

THOMAS GRAY

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOUR- ITE CAT

DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD-FISHES

[Written 1747 and inclosed in a letter to
Walpole]

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dy'd
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclin'd,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
'Bro' richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize:—
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant fate sat by, and smiled)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to ev'ry watery God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
A favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize:
Nor all, that glisters, gold.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

[Publ. 1747]

"Ἀνθρωπὸς ἰκανὴ πρόφασιν εἰς τὸ δυστυχῆν
MENANDER

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her HENRY's¹ holy Shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of WINDSOR's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers
among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
Ah fields belov'd in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father THAMES, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green
The paths of pleasure trace;
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

¹ Henry VI, founder of the College.

While some on earnest business bent
 Their murmuring labours ply
 'Gainst graver hours, that bring con-
 straint

To sweeten liberty :
 Some bold adventurers disdain
 The limits of their little reign,
 And unknown regions dare descry :
 Still as they run they look behind,
 They hear a voice in every wind,
 And snatch a fearful joy. 40

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
 Less pleasing when possess'd ;
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,
 The sunshine of the breast :
 Their buxom health of rosy hue,
 Wild wit, invention ever-new
 And lively cheer of vigour born ;
 The thoughtless day, the easy night,
 The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
 That fly th' approach of morn. 50

Alas, regardless of their doom,
 The little victims play !
 No sense have they of ills to come,
 Nor care beyond to-day :
 Yet see how all around 'em wait
 The ministers of human fate,
 And black misfortune's baleful train !
 Ah, shew them where in ambush stand
 To seize their prey the murderous band !
 Ah, tell them they are men ! 60

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that skulks behind ;
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 And Sorrow's piercing dart. 70

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning infamy.
 The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow ;
 And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
 And moody Madness laughing wild
 Amid severest woe. 80

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
 A grisly troop are seen,
 The painful family of Death,
 More hideous than their Queen :
 This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
 That every labouring sinew strains,
 Those in the deeper vitals rage :
 Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
 That numbs the soul with icy hand,
 And slow-consuming Age. 90

To each his sufferings : all are men,
 Condemn'd alike to groan ;
 The tender for another's pain,
 Th' unfeeling for his own.
 Yet, ah ! why should they know their fate,
 Since sorrow never comes too late,
 And happiness too swiftly flies ?
 Thought would destroy their paradise.
 No more ; where ignorance is bliss,
 'T is folly to be wise. 100

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

[Publ. 1751]

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary
 way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to
 me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on
 the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning
 flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
 The moping owl does to the moon com-
 plain 10
 Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's
 shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a moulder-
 ing heap,
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-
built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing
horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly
bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall
burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has
broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy
stroke !

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

(The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fret-
ted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of
praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial
fire ;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have
sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er un-
roll ; 50
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush un-
seen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless
breast

The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's
blood. 60

Th' applause of listening senates to com-
mand,

The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes
confined;

Forbad to wade through slaughter to a
throne,

And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to
hide, 65

To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

(Far from the madding crowd's ignoble
strife,

Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to pro-
tect

Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculp-
ture deck'd

Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlet-
ter'd muse,

The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul re-
 lies, 89
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature
 cries,
 Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd
 dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high
 His listless length at noontide would he
 stretch,
 And pour upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn
 Muttering his wayward fancies he would
 rove;
 Now drooping, woeful wan, like one for-
 lorn,
 Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless
 love.

'One morn I missed him on the custom'd
 hill, 109
 Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

'The next, with dirges due in sad array
 Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him
 borne;—
 Approach and read (for thou can'st read)
 the lay,
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged
 thorn.'

The Epitaph

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown:
 Fair science frown'd not on his humble
 birth, 119
 And melancholy mark'd him for her own.

'Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
 Heav'n did a recompence as largely send:

He gave to misery (all he had), a tear,
 He gained from Heav'n ('twas all he
 wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

TO ADVERSITY

[Publ. 1753]

Ζήτω
 Τὸν φρονεῖν ἄπορτος δόμῳ —
 σαρρα, τὴν πάθει μάδαν
 Θέρτα κυρίως ἔχειν.

ÆSCHYLUS, Agamemnon.

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless Power,
 Thou tamer of the human breast,
 Whose iron scourge and torturing hour,
 The bad affright, afflict the best!
 Bound in thy adamantine chain
 The proud are taught to taste of pain,
 And purple tyrants vainly groan
 With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
 Virtue, his darling child, design'd, 10
 To thee he gave the heav'nly birth,
 And bad to form her infant mind.
 Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
 With patience many a year she bore:
 What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
 And from her own she learn'd to melt at
 others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
 Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
 Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
 And leave us leisure to be good. 20
 Light they disperse, and with them go
 The summer friend, the flatt'ring foe:
 By vain Prosperity receiv'd,
 To her they vow their truth, and are again
 believ'd.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd
 Immers'd in rapturous thought profound,
 And Melancholy, silent maid,
 With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
 Still on thy solemn steps attend:
 Warm Charity, the general friend, 30
 With Justice, to herself severe,
 And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing
 tear.

Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,
 Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
 Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
 Nor circled with the vengeful band
 (As by the impious thou art seen)
 With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
 With screaming horror's funeral cry,
 Despair, and fell disease, and ghastly pov-
 erty. 40

Thy form benign, oh Goddess! wear,
 Thy milder influence impart,
 Thy philosophic train be there
 To soften, not to wound my heart.
 The generous spark extinct revive,
 Teach me to love and to forgive,
 Exact my own defects to scan,
 What others are to feel, and know myself
 a man.

SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST

[Written in 1742, the year of West's death;
 publ. posthumously by Mason.]

IN vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
 Or cheerful fields resume their green
 attire:

These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
 A different object do these eyes require:
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier
 men;

The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
 To warm their little loves the birds com-
 plain:

I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
 And weep the more, because I weep in
 vain.

ODE

ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM
VICISSITUDE

[Written perhaps 1754, publ. posthumously by
 Mason.]

Now the golden morn aloft
 Waves her dew-bespangled wing,

With vermil cheek, and whisper soft
 She wooes the tardy Spring:
 Till April starts, and calls around
 The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
 And lightly o'er the living scene
 Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
 Frisking ply their feeble feet;
 Forgetful of their wintry trance,
 The birds his presence greet:
 But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
 His trembling thrilling extasy;
 And lessening from the dazzled sight,
 Melts into air and liquid light.

Yesterday the sullen year
 Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
 Mute was the music of the air,
 The herd stood drooping by:
 Their raptures now that wildly flow,
 No yesterday, nor morrow know;
 'Tis man alone that joy describes
 With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past misfortune's brow
 Soft reflection's hand can trace;
 And o'er the cheek of sorrow throw
 A melancholy grace;
 While hope prolongs our happier hour,
 Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
 And blacken round our weary way,
 Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy pleasure leads,
 See a kindred grief pursue;
 Behind the steps that misery treads
 Approaching comfort view:
 The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
 Chastised by sabler tints of woe;
 And blended form, with artful strife
 The strength and harmony of life. 40

See the wretch, that long has tost
 On the thorny bed of pain,
 At length repair his vigour lost,
 And breathe, and walk again:
 The meanest floweret of the vale,
 The simplest note that swells the gale,
 The common sun, the air, the skies,
 To him are opening Paradise.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

THE TRAVELLER

OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

[Publ. 1765]

TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH

DEAR SIR, — I am sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it, when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man, who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of criticism, and from the divisions of party, that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement. Painting and Music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival Poetry, and at length supplant her; they engross all that favour once shown to her, and, though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in greater danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say: for error is ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous, I mean Party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contrib-

utes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man, after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet: his tawdry lampoons are called satires; his turbulence is said to be force, and his frenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse, to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to show, that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge better than yourself how far these positions are illustrated in this poem.

I am, dear sir, your most affectionate brother,
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheld, or wandering Po;
(Or onward, where the rude Corinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the
door;

Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee:
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless
pain,

And drags at each remove a lengthening
chain.

Eternal blessings crown my earliest
friend,

And round his dwelling guardian saints at-
tend;

Bless'd be that spot, where cheerful guests
retire

To pause from toil, and trim their evening
fire;

Bless'd that abode, where want and pain
repair,

And every stranger finds a ready chair;

Bless'd be those feasts with simple plenty
crown'd,

Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale; 20
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destined such delights to
share,

My prime of life in wandering spent and
care;

Impell'd with steps unceasing to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with
the view;

That, like the circle bounding earth and
skies,

Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.

E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And placed on high, above the storm's
career,

Look downward where a hundred realms
appear;

Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler
pride.

When thus creation's charms around com-
bine,

Amidst the store, should thankless pride
repine?

Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bos-
om vain? 40

Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.

Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splen-
dour crown'd,

Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion
round,

Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale,
Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery
vale,

For me your tributary stores combine;
Creation's heir, the world, the world is
mine. 50

As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it
o'er;

Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting
still;

Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleased with each good that heaven to man
supplies:

Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd, 60
Where my worn soul, each wandering hope
at rest,

May gather bliss, to see my fellows bless'd.
But where to find that happiest spot be-
low,

Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease:
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods, for all the good they
gave. 72

Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we
roam,

His first, best country ever is at home.

And yet, perhaps, if countries we com-
pare,

And estimate the blessings which they
share,

Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom
find

An equal portion dealt to all mankind:
As different good, by art or nature given,
To different nations makes their blessings
even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at labour's earnest
call;

With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's cliff as Arno's shelvy side;
And though the rocky-crested summits
frown,

These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of
down.

From art more various are the blessings
sent;

Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, con-
tent:

Yet these each other's power so strong
contest

That either seems destructive of the rest. 90
Where wealth and freedom reign content-
ment fails;

And honour sinks where commerce long
prevails:

Hence every state, to one loved blessing
prune,

Conforms and models life to that alone:
Each to the favourite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other
ends;

Till, carried to excess in each domain,
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer
eyes,

And trace them through the prospect as it
lies; ¹⁰⁰

Here for awhile, my proper cares resign'd,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
Like yon neglected shrub, at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every
blast.

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends:
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's
side,

Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mouldering tops
between ¹⁰⁹

With memorable grandeur mark the scene.

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely bless'd.

Whatever fruits in different climes are
found,

That proudly rise, or humbly court the
ground;

Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied
year;

Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die;
These here disporting own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While seaborn gales their gelid wings ex-
pand ¹²¹

To winnow fragrance round the smiling
land.

But small the bliss that sense alone be-
stows,

And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindles
here.

Contrasted faults through all his manners
reign;

Though poor, luxurious; though submissive,
vain;

Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet un-
true:

And e'en in penance planning sins anew. ¹³⁰

All evils here contaminate the mind,
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs, not far removed the
date,

When commerce proudly flourish'd through
the state;

At her command the palace learn'd to rise,
Again the long fallen column sought the
skies;

The canvass glow'd, beyond e'en Nature
warm,

The pregnant quarry teem'd with human
form:

Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her
sail; ¹⁴⁰

While nought remain'd of all that riches
gave,

But towns unmann'd and lords without a
slave:

And late the nation found, with fruitless
skill,

Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet, still the loss of wealth is here sup-
plied

By arts, the splendid wrecks of former
pride;

From these the feeble heart and long-fallen
mind

An easy compensation seem to find.

Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp ar-
ray'd,

The pasteboard triumph and the caval-
ende: ¹⁵⁰

Processions form'd for piety and love,

A mistress or a saint in every grove.

By sports like these are all their cares be-
guiled,

The sports of children satisfy the child:
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul:
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:

As in those domes, where Cæsars once bore
away,

Defaced by time, and tottering in decay, ¹⁶⁰
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,

The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wondering man could want the larger
pile,

Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them, turn we to
survey

Where rougher climes a nobler race dis-
play,

Where the bleak Swiss their stormy man-
sions tread,

And force a churlish soil for scanty bread;
No product here the barren hills afford
But man and steel, the soldier and his
sword: 170

No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter lingering chills the lap of May;
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's
breast,

But meteors glare, and stormy glooms in-
vest.

Yet still, e'en here, content can spread a
charm,

Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts
though small,

He sees his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
To shame the meanness of his humble
shed; 180

No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
To make him loathe his vegetable meal;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.
Cheerful at morn, he wakes from short re-
pose,

Breathes the keen air, and carols as he
goes;

With patient angle trolls the finny deep,
Or drives his ventures ploughshare to the
steep;

Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark
the way,

And drags the struggling savage into day.
At night returning, every labour sped, 191
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round sur-
veys

His children's looks, that brighten at the
blaze;

While his loved partner, boastful of her
board,

Displays her cleanly platter on the board:
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.

Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart; 200
And e'en those hills, that round his mansion
rise,

Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies:
Dear is that shed to which his soul con-
forms.

And dear that hill which lifts him to the
storms;

And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's
breast,

So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's
roar

But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states as-
sign'd;

Their wants but few, their wishes all con-
fined; 210

Yet let them only share the praises due,
If few their wants, their pleasures are but
few;

For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when re-
dress'd:

Whence from such lands each pleasing sci-
ence flies,

That first excites desire and then supplies;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures
cloy,

To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul
to flame.

Catch every nerve and vibrate through the
frame, 220

Their level life is but a mouldering fire,
Unquench'd by want, unfaun'd by strong
desire;

Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

But not their joys alone thus coarsely
flow;

Their morals, like their pleasures, are but
low;

For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimproved, the manners run;
And love's and friendship's finely pointed
dart 231

Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's
breast

May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest:
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultured walks, and
charm the way,

These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions
fly,

To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners
reign,

I turn; and France displays her bright do-
main: 240

Gay sprightly land of mirth and social
ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world
can please,

How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring
Loire!

Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the zephyr
flew.

And haply, though my harsh touch, falter-
ing still,

But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the daucer's
skill;

Yet would the village praise my wondrous
power,

And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days 251
Have led their children through the mirth-
ful maze;

And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic
lore,

Has friak'd beneath the burden of three-
score.

So bless'd a life these thoughtless realms
display,

Thus idly busy rolls their world away:
Their are those arts that mind to mind
endear,

For honour forms the social temper here:
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or e'en imaginary worth obtains, 260
Here passes current; paid from hand to
hand,

It shifts, in splendid traffic, round the land:
From courts to camp, to cottages it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise;

Hence please, are pleased, they give to get
esteem,

Till, seeming bless'd, they grow to what
they seem.

But while this softer art their bliss sup-
plies,

It gives their follies also room to rise;
For praise too dearly loved, or warmly
sought, 269

Enfeebles all internal strength of thought;
And the weak soul, within itself unblest'd,

Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,

Pants for the vulgar praise which fools im-
part;

Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze with copper
lace;

Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a
year:

The mind still turns where shifting fashion
draws,

Nor weighs the solid worth of self-ap-
plause. 280

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland
lies.

Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the
land,

And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.

Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow,
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery
roar, 289

Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore:
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him
smile:

The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus, while around the wave-subjected
soil

Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain. 300

Hence all the good from opulence that
springs,

With all those ills superfluous treasure
brings,

Are here display'd. Their much loved wealth
imparts

Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;
But view them closer, craft and fraud ap-
pear,

E'en liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,

The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves, 309

Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,
And, calmly bent, to servitude conform,

Dull as their lakes that slumber in the
storn.

Heavens! how unlike their Belgic sires
of old!

Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold;
War in each breast, and freedom on each
brow,

How much unlike the sons of Britain now!

Fired at the sound, my genius spreads
her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western
spring;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian
pride,
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes
glide; ³²⁰

There all around the gentlest breezes stray,
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there com-
bined,

Extremes are only in the master's mind;
Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her
state,

With daring aims irregularly great:
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashion'd, fresh from nature's
hand, ³³⁰

Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control,
While e'en the peasant boasts these rights
to scan,

And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pic-
tured here,

Thine are those charms that dazzle and en-
dear;

Too bless'd indeed were such without alloy,
But, foster'd e'en by freedom, ills annoy;
That independence, Britons prize too high,
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social
tie; ³⁴⁰

The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life un-
known;

Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd;
Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar,
Repress'd ambition struggles round her
shore;

Till, overwrought, the general system feels
Its motious stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties de-
cay,

As duty, love, and honour fail to sway, ³⁵⁰
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and
law,

Still gather strength, and force unwilling
awe.

Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sunks, and merit weeps un-
known;

Till time may come, when, stripp'd of all
her charms,

The land of scholars, and the nurse of
arms,

Where noble stems transmit the patriot
flame,

Where kings have toil'd, and poets wrote for
fame,

One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings unhonour'd
die. ³⁶⁰

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills
I state,

I mean to flatter kings, or court the great:
Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul as-
pire,

Far from my bosom drive the low desire!
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to
feel

The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt or favour's fostering
sun,

Still may thy blooms the changeful clime
endure!

I only would repress them to secure; ³⁷⁰
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those
that toil;

And all that Freedom's highest aims can
reach

Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportion'd
grow,

Its double weight must ruin all below.

Oh, then how blind to all that truth re-
quires,

Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise to arms,
Except when fast approaching danger
warms: ³⁸⁰

But when contending chiefs blockade the
throne,

Contracting regal power to stretch their
own;

When I behold a faction band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are
free;

Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the
law;

The wealth of climes, where savage nations
roam,

Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at
home;

Fear, pity, justice, indignation, start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling
heart;

390

Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful
hour

When first ambition struck at regal power;
And thus polluting honour in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double
force.

Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled
shore,

Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore?
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they
waste;

400

Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scatter'd hamlets
rose

In barren solitary pomp repose?

Have we not seen, at pleasure's lordly call,
The smiling long-frequented village fall?

Beheld the duteous son, the sire decay'd,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid
Forced from their homes, a melancholy
train,

409

To traverse climes beyond the western main;
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps
around,

And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?
E'en now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim
strays

Through tangled forests, and through dan-
gerous ways;

Where beasts with man divided empire
claim,

And the brown Indian marks with murder-
ous aim;

There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,

The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 420
Casts a long look where England's glories
shine,

And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind.
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and re-
pose,

To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws re-
strain,

How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or
cure!

430

Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find:

With secret course, which no loud storms
annoy,

Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of
steel,

To men remote from power but rarely
known,

Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our
own.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

[Publ. 1770]

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR SIR, — I can have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deploras is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer, than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty

years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, dear sir, your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

SWEET AUBURN! loveliest village of the plain,

Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,

Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please:

How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!

How often have I paused on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topp'd the neighbouring hill,

The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,

For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I bless'd the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree:

While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;

And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.

And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;

The dancing pair that simply sought renown,

By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;

The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.

These were thy charms, sweet village!
sports like these,

With sweet succession taught e'en toil to please;

These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,

These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,

Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;

Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,

And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,

And half a tillage stupefies thy smiling plain;

No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But choked with sedges works its weedy way;

Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;

Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.

Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;

And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,

Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,

Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:

But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,

When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;

For him light labour spread her wholesome store,

Just gave what life required, but gave no more:

His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train

Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;

Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets
 rose,
 Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp re-
 pose ;
 And every want to luxury allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to
 bloom,
 Those calm desires that ask'd but little
 room, ⁷⁰
 Those healthful sports that graced the peace-
 ful scene,
 Lived in each look, and brighten'd all the
 green ;
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.
 Sweet AUBURN ! parent of the blissful
 hour,
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's
 power.
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd
 grounds,
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn
 grew, ⁸⁰
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy
 train,
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to
 pain.
 In all my wanderings round this world of
 care,
 In all my griefs — and God has given my
 share —
 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me
 down ;
 To husband out life's taper at the close,
 And keep the flame from wasting by re-
 pose :
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd
 skill, ⁹⁰
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
 And as a hare, whom hounds and horns
 pursue,
 Parts to the place from whence at first she
 flew,
 I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,
 Here to return — and die at home at last.
 O bless'd retirement, friend to life's de-
 cline,
 Retreats from care, that never must be
 mine,

How bless'd is he who crowns, in shades
 like these,
 A youth of labour with an age of ease ; ¹⁰⁰
 Who quits a world where strong tempta-
 tions try,
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
 For him no wretches, born to work and
 weep,
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous
 deep ;
 No surly porter stands, in guilty state,
 To spurn unplinging famine from the gate ;
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;
 Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
 While resignation gently slopes the way ; ¹¹⁰
 And, all his prospects brightening to the
 last,
 His heaven begins ere the world be
 pass'd.
 Sweet was the sound, when oft at even-
 ing's close
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;
 There, as I pass'd with careless steps and
 slow,
 The mingling notes came soften'd from
 below ;
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
 The sober herd that low'd to meet their
 young ;
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
 The playful children just let loose from
 school, ¹²⁰
 The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whis-
 pering wind,
 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant
 mind ;
 These all in sweet confusion sought the
 shade,
 And fill'd each pause the nightingale had
 made.
 But now the sounds of population fail,
 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
 No busy steps the grass-grown footway
 tread,
 But all the blooming flush of life is fled ;
 All but yon widow'd, solitary thing, ¹²⁹
 That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ;
 She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for
 bread,
 To strip the brook with mantling cresses
 spread,
 To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn
 To seek her nightly shed, and weep till
 morn ;

She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change his place ;

Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,

He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain ; 150

The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;

The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd ;

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away ;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,

Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.

Pleased with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,

And quite forgot their vices in their woe ; 160
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,

And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt, at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all :

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,

He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid, 171

And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,

The reverend champion stood. At his control

Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,

And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,

His looks adorn'd the venerable place ;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,

And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray. 180

The service pass'd, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran :
E'en children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.

His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distress'd :

To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,

But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.

As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,

Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside you straggling fence that skirts the way

With blossom'd furze, unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school:

A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew ;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace

The day's disasters in his morning face ; 200
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd ;

Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declared how much he knew,
'T was certain he could write and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides

presage, 200
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge :

In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue
still;

While words of learned length and thun-
dering sound

Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder
grew

That one small head could carry all he knew.

But pass'd is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on
high,

Where once the signpost caught the passing
eye, 220

Low lies that house where nutbrown
draughts inspired,

Where graybeard mirth and smiling toil
retired,

Where village statesmen talk'd with looks
profound,

And news much older than their ale went
round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place;
The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded
floor,

The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the
door, 228

The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of
goose;

The hearth, except when winter chill'd the
day,

With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fen-
nel gay;

While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprive the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's
heart; 240

Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;

No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall pre-
vail;

No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to
bear;

The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;

Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud dis-
dain,

These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their firstborn
sway;

Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.

But the long pomp, the midnight masquer-
ade,

With all the freaks of wanton wealth ar-
ray'd, 260

In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;

And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts de-
coy,

The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who
survey

The rich man's joys increase, the poor's de-
cay,

'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits
stand

Between a splendid and a happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted
ore,

And shouting Folly hails them from her
shore; 270

Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world
around.

Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a
name

That leaves our useful products still the
same.

Not so the loss. The man of wealth and
pride

Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended
bounds,

Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half
their growth; 280

His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;

While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure
all,

In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her
reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress
supplies,

289

Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are pass'd, for
charms are frail,

When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:

Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd:

But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine, from the smil-
ing land

The mournful peasant leads his humble
band;

300

And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty re-
side,

To scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits
stray'd,

He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth
divide,

And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—What waits him
there?

To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts com-
bined

311

To pamper luxury, and thin mankind:
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know,
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.

Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn
pomp display,

There the black gibbet glooms beside the
way;

The dome where pleasure holds her mid-
night reign,

Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous
train;

320

Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing
square,

The rattling chariots clash, the torches
glare,

Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er an-
noy!

Sure these denote one universal joy!

Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah,
turn thine eyes

Where the poor houseless shivering female
lies:

She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the
thorn;

335

Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from
the shower,

With heavy heart, deplores that luckless
hour,

When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country
brown.

Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the love-
liest train,

Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little
bread!

340

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes be-
tween,

Through torrid tracts with fainting steps
they go,

Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd
before,

The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to
sing,

But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance
crown'd,

Where the dark scorpion gathers death
around:

Where at each step the stranger fears to
wake

The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless
prey,

And savage men more murderous still than
they:

While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the
skies.

Far different these from every former
scene,

359

The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,

The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that
parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks
away;

When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd
round their last,

And took a long farewell, and wish'd in
vain

For seats like these beyond the western
main;

And, shuddering still to face the distant
deep,

Return'd and wept, and still return'd to
weep. ³⁷⁰

The good old sire the first prepared to go,
To new-found worlds, and wept for others'
woe;

But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent next, neglectful of her charms
And left a lover's for her father's arms.

With louder complaints the mother spoke her
woes,

And bless'd the cot where every pleasure
rose; ³⁸⁰

And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many
a tear,

And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly
dear;

Whilst her fond husband strove to lend
relief

In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou cursed by heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for
thee!

How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness
grown,

Boast of a florid vigour not their own: ³⁹⁰
At every draught more large and large they
grow,

A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part
unsound,

Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin
round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;

E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I
stand,

I see the rural virtues leave the land.

Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads
the sail,

That idly waiting flaps with every gale, ⁴⁰⁰
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,

And kind connubial tenderness are there;

And piety with wishes placed above,

And steady loyalty, and faithful love.

And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,

Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,

Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,

To catch the heart, or strike for honest
fame; ⁴¹⁰

Dear charming nymph, neglected and de-
cied,

My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;

Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,

That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st
me so;

Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,

Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well;

Farewell! and O! where'er thy voice betried,

On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,

Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,

Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, ⁴²⁰

Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,

Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;

Aid slighted Truth with thy persuasive train;

Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;

Teach him, that states of native strength
possess'd,

Though very poor, may still be very bless'd;

That trade's proud empire hastes to swift
decay,

As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;

While self dependent power can time defy,

As rocks resist the billows and the sky. ⁴³⁰

STANZAS ON WOMAN

WHEN lovely woman stoops to folly,

And finds too late that men betray,

What charm can soothe her melancholy,

What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,

To hide her shame from every eye,

To give repentance to her lover,

And wring his bosom — is, to die.

WILLIAM COWPER

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard;
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.

My friends, — do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair,
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

THE TASK

[Publ. 1785]

BOOK V

THE WINTER MORNING WALK

ARGUMENT

A frosty morning — The foddering of cattle — The woodman and his dog — The poultry — Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall — The Empress of Russia: palace of ice — Amusements of monarchs — War, one of them — War, whence — And whence monarchy — The evils of it — English and French loyalty contrasted — The Bastille, and a prisoner there — Liberty the chief recommendation of this country — Modern patriotism questionable, and why — The perishable nature of the best human institutions — Spiritual liberty not perishable — The slavish state of man by nature — Deliver him, Deist, if you can — Grace must do it — The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated — Their different treatment — Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free — His relish of the works of God — Address to the Creator.

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon: while the
clouds

That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slant-
ing ray

Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense, 11
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb
Transformed to a lean shank. The shape-
less pair,

As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and as I near ap-
proach

The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the
man. 20

The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the beuts
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the
fence

Screens them, and seem half-petrified to
sleep

In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering
man, 30

Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's de-
lay.

He from the stack carves out the accus-
tomed load,

Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging
oft,

His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant
stands,

With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Decidious, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving uncon-
cerned 41

The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the
axe

And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.

Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed
ears

And tail cropped short, half lurcher and
half cur,

His dog attends him. Close behind his
heel

Now creeps he slow; and now with many
a frisk

Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted
snow

With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his
snout; 50

Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks
for joy.

Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops
for aught,

But now and then with pressure of his
thumb

To adjust the fragrant charge of a short
tube

That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing
cloud

Streams far behind him, scenting all the
air.

Now from the roost, or from the neighbour-
ing pale,

Where, diligent to catch the first faint
gleam

Of smiling day, they gossiped side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-
known call 61

The feathered tribes domestic. Half on
wing,

And half on foot, they brush the fleecy
flood,

Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering
eaves

To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often
scared

As oft return, a pert voracious kind.

Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook, 71

Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes

His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent

His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.
How find the myriads that in summer cheer

The hills and valleys with their ceaseless
songs

Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?

Earth yields them nought: the imprisoned
worm is safe 80

Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie covered close; and berry-bearing thorns
That feed the thrush (whatever some sup-
pose)

Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long-protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks
and holes

Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they
die.

The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut
now 90

Repays their labour more; and perched
aloft

By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet
to them,

Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid
blank,

O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away. 100

Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below:

No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered
banks

With forms so various, that no powers of
art,

The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !
Here glittering turrets rise, unbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement !) on the roof 111
Large growth of what may seem the spark-
ling trees

And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast con-
gealed,

Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam; there embossed and fretted
wild,

The growing wonder takes a thousand
shapes

Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain 120

The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more ad-
mired,

Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ !
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak, 130
The wonder of the North. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent
its stores

To enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew
the floods,

And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:

In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of Winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy
sleet, 140

Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's
course,

And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement
asked

Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side; a watery light 150
Gleamed through the clear transparency.
that seemed

Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame
serene.

So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frostbound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy
wreaths

Of flowers, that feared no enemy but
warmth,

Blushed on the panels. Mirror needed
none 160

Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seemed at least commodious seat)
were there,

Sofa and couch and high-built throne august.

The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene

Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.

Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesigned severity, that glanced ¹⁷⁰

(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.

'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless as it seemed

Intrinsically precious; to the foot
'Treach'rous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings.
Some have played

At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain high.

Some have amused the dull sad years of life, ¹⁸⁰

Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought

By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.

Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.

But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,

Kings would not play at. Nations would do well

To extort their truncheons from the puny hands

Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds ¹⁹⁰
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,

Because men suffer it, their toy the world.

When Babel was confounded, and the great

Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,

Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,

God drove asunder, and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon

He gave them, in its distribution fair ²⁰⁰
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.

Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed
and sowed,

And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.

But violence can never longer sleep

Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
The Deluge washed it out, but left unquenched

The seeds of murder in the breast of man. ²¹⁰

Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found

The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,

And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel

To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,

The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.

His art survived the waters; and ere long, ²²⁰

When man was multiplied and spread abroad

In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,

The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some,

To improve and cultivate their just demesne,

Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth; these fought for spoil,

And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length ²³⁰

One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,

Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds

Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?

Or who so worthy to control themselves
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?

Thus war affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,

Which have their exigencies too, and call ²⁴⁰
For skill in government, at length made king.

King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,

So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,

Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within 250
A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and
wields,

Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot
move.

Conscious of impotence, they soon grow
drunk

With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the
dust, 260

Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long, 269
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges
born

To bear his burdens; drawing in his gears
And sweating in his service; his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning, and they think the
same.

Thus kings were first invented, and thus
kings

Were burnished into heroes, and became 280
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs, that have but croaked
and died.

Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated
man

To eminence fit only for a god
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that when at length
mankind

Had reached the sinewy firmness of their
youth,

And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were
yet 290

Babes in the cause of freedom, and should
fear

And quake before the gods themselves had
made!

But above measure strange, that neither
proof

Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed,
Can even now, when they are grown ma-
ture

In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so
prone

To reverence what is ancient, and can
plead 300

A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because delivered down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules, 310
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he
will,

Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustained,
And force the beggarly last dole, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the
clutch

Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die? 320
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous
branch,

Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence
springs

Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to
hang

His thorns with streamers of continual
praise? 330

We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his
 bounds,

And reigns content within them: him we
 serve

Freely and with delight, who leaves us
 free:

But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though
 he be,

And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to
 grant: 340

Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the State,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast
 your love

Of kings, between your loyalty and ours:
We love the man, the paltry pageant you;
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
You the regardless author of its woes; 350
We, for the sake of liberty, a king,
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the
 dust.

Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved,
Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning
 praise, 360

Where love is mere attachment to the
 throne,

Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by suffrance, and at
 will

Of a superior, he is never free.

Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.

The State that strives for liberty, though
 foiled,

And forced to abandon what she bravely
 sought,

Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause

Not often unsuccessful; power usurped 371
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of

 wring,

'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.

But slaves that once conceive the glowing
 thought

Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
The surest presage of the good they seek.

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious
 more

To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land, 381
Her house of bondage, worse than that of
 old

Which God avenged on Pharaoh — the Bas-
 tille.

Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken
 hearts,

Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to
 age

With music such as suits their sovereign
 ears,

The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not
 leap

To hear that ye were fallen at last; to
 know 390

That even our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were
 free.

For he who values liberty confines

His zeal for her predominance within

No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.

There dwell the most forlorn of human
 kind,

Immured though unaccused, condemned un-
 tried,

Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.

There, like the visionary emblem seen 400
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,

And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs
 are gone.

To count the hour-bell, and expect no
 change;

And ever as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that though a joyless note

To him whose moments all have one dull
 pace,

¹ The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast or ball; 410
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight —

To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting and without her
tools —

To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own —
To turn purveyor to an overgorged 421
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
Is made familiar, watches its approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a
friend —

To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
Then downward, and then upward, then
aslant,

And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless
task

Some relish, till the sum exactly found 430
In all directions, he begins again: —
Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around
With woes, which who that suffers would
not kneel

And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow-
man,

Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears, 441
Moves indignation, makes the name of
king

(Of king whom such prerogative can
please)

As dreadful as the Manichean God,
Adored through fear, strong only to de-
stroy.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All con-
straint,

Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes 450
Their progress in the road of science; blinds

The eyesight of discovery, and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou
art,

With all thy loss of empire, and though
squeezed

By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the State,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief 460
Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than
mine;

Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From nature's bounty — that humane ad-
dress

And sweetness, without which no pleasure
is 470

In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless
brawl;

Yet being free I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou
art,

To seek no sublunary rest beside.

But once enslaved, farewell! I could en-
dure

Chains nowhere patiently, and chains at
home,

Where 'I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the
grain 480

Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double
pain

Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys
bled,

I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere,
In scenes which, having never known me
free, 489

Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven
grant I may!

But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that
takes

Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith 500
And lack of knowledge, and with cause
enough:

For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the
whole

Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man
there?

Can he be strenuous in his country's cause
Who slights the charities for whose dear
sake

That country, if at all, must be beloved?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are
sad

For England's glory, seeing it wax pale 510
And sickly, while her champions wear their
hearts

So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturbed by factious
fumes,

Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose tempered
blades

Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
And hewed them link from link. Then Al-
bion's sons

Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,
And shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once called to public
view. 521

'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the State,
That promised once more firmness, so as-
sailed

That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless, expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour. 530
Was registered in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest
works

Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace re-
mains.

We build with what we deem eternal rock;
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
The indiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty 'unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the
powers 540

Of earth and hell confederate take away;
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
Bought with His blood who gave it to man-
kind,

And sealed with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts 550
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them
His,

And are august, but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the
Word

That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark be-
fore.

But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene, 560
Might well suppose the artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had He not Himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doomed it as insufficient for His praise.
These therefore are occasional, and pass;
Formed for the confutation of the fool, 567
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of His love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits He sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into His arms.
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe. 580

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,

Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such
force

Resistless, from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downwards; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from lusts opposed in
vain,

And self-reproaching conscience. He fore-
sees

The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which
his sins

Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery; future death,
And death still future: not an hasty stroke
Like that which sends him to the dusty
grave,

But unrepeatable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded,
must.

That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquished.

Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived, the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse,
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foiled
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the
cause

Perversely, which of late she so condemned;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tattered in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.

"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
And stored the earth so plenteously with
means

To gratify the hunger of his wish,
And doth He reprobate, and will He damn,
The use of His own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must de-
spair?

Falsehood! which whose but suspects of
truth

Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? Have they faith
In what, with such solemnity of tone
And gesture, they propound to our belief?
Nay,—conduct hath the loudest tongue.

The voice
Is but an instrument on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."

Such reasonings (if that name must needs
belong

To excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
(As often as, libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till hardened his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He alights the strokes of conscience. Noth-
ing moves,

Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but fostered his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of
death.

Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him
hear

Of rectitude and fitness; moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to THE FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the
powers

Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise;
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse. —
Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding
brass, 681

Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly
beam,
And chills and darkens a wide wandering
soul.

The *still small voice* is wanted. He must
speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they
come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a
change

That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast, 690
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute 700
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toiled, and in their coun-
try's cause

Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they de-
serve,

Receive proud recompense. We give in
charge

Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic
Muse,

Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass 710
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
But fairer wreaths are due, though never
paid,

To those who, posted at the shrine of truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure to his loved land,
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is
shed

In confirmation of the noblest claim, 720
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived un-
known

Till Persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes
flew —

No marble tells us whither. With their
names

No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed 730
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little
praise.¹

He is the freeman whom the truth makes
free,

And all are slaves beside. There's not a
chain

That hellish foes confederate for his harm
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green
wolves.

He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor perhaps com-
pared

With those whose mansions glitter in his
sight, 740

Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say — "My Father made them
all!"

Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy
joy, 750

Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted
mind

With worthy thoughts of that unwearied
love

That planned, and built, and still upholds a
world

So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes — ye may fill your garner, ye that
reap

The loaded soil, and ye may waste much
good

In senseless riot; but ye will not find

¹ See Hume.

In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
 A liberty like his, who unimpeached
 Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong, 760
 Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
 And has a richer use of yours than you.
 He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
 Of no mean city, planned or ere the hills
 Were built, the fountains opened, or the
 sea

With all his roaring multitude of waves.
 His freedom is the same in every State,
 And no condition of this changeful life,
 So manifold in cares, whose every day
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less: 770
 For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
 No nook so narrow but he spreads them
 there

With ease, and is at large. The oppressor
 holds
 His body bound, but knows not what a
 range

His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain,
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt
 Whom God delights in, and in whom He
 dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou
 wouldst taste

His works. Admitted once to His em-
 brace, 780

Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind
 before ;

Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine
 heart,

Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,
 Till then unfelt, what hands divine have
 wrought.

Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces
 prone

And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
 It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
 From inland regions to the distant main.

Man views it and admires, but rests con-
 tent 791

With what he views. The landscape has
 his praise,

But not its Author. Unconcerned who
 formed

The paradise he sees, he finds it such;
 And such well-pleased to find it, asks no
 more.

Not so the mind that has been touched from
 Heaven,

And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
 To read His wonders, in whose thought the
 world,

Fair as it is, existed ere it was.

Not for its own sake merely, but for His 800
 Much more who fashioned it, he gives it
 praise;

Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,
 To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds
 at once

Its only just proprietor in Him.

The soul that sees Him, or receives sub-
 limed

New faculties, or learns at least to employ
 More worthily the powers she owned before,
 Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
 Of ignorance, till then she overlooked, 809
 A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
 Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,
 The unambiguous footsteps of the God
 Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing.
 And wheels His throne upon the rolling
 worlds.

Much conversant with Heaven, she often
 holds

With those fair ministers of light to man
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
 Sweet conference; enquires what strains
 were they

With which heaven rang, when every star,
 in haste

To gratulate the new-created earth, 820
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
 Shouted for joy. — "Tell me, ye shining
 hosts

That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
 Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
 If from your elevation, whence ye view
 Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
 And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
 Have reached this nether world, ye spy a
 race

Favoured as ours, transgressors from the
 womb, 830

And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
 And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
 As one who long detained on foreign shores
 Pants to return, and when he sees afar
 His country's weather-bleached and bat-
 tered rocks

From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
 Radiant with joy towards the happy land,
 So I with animated hopes behold,
 And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
 That show like beacons in the blue abyss,

Ordained to guide the embodied spirit
home, 840

From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must
thither tend."

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whose sees, no longer wanders lost,
With intellects benighted in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast
built,

With means that were not till by thee em-
ployed, 850

Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in
strength

Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee
Till Thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is in-
deed

A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to
learn, 859

And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell;
Yet deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.
We give to Chance, blind Chance, our-
selves as blind,

The glory of thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely
judged.

But Chance is not; or is not where Thou
reignest: 870

Thy Providence forbids that sickle power
(If power she be that works but to con-
found)

To mix the wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods
that sleep,

Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure, 880
Made such by thee, we love thee for that
cause

For which we shunned and hated thee before.
Then we are free: then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from
heaven

Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice
of song,

A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works, 888
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment, Nature throwing
wide

Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power de-
nied.

Thou art the source and centre of all
minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are lost and
rove

At random without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that soothes the life of
man, 900

His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to
serve.

But oh, Thou bounteous Giver of all good!
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are
poor;

And with Thee rich, take that Thou wilt
away.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN
HE INTENDED AND CAME SAFE
HOME AGAIN

[Publ. 1783]

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the
wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it
me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
 Away went hat and wig;
 He little dreamt, when he set out,
 Of running such a rig.

100

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
 Till, loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
 The bottles he had slung;
 A bottle swinging at each side,
 As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
 Up flew the windows all;
 And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
 As loud as he could bawl.

110

Away went Gilpin — who but he?
 His fame soon spread around;
 "He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
 " 'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
 'Twas wonderful to view,
 How in a trice the turnpike-men
 Their gates wide open threw.

120

And now, as he went bowing down
 His reeking head full low,
 The bottles twain behind his back
 Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
 Most piteous to be seen,
 Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
 As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
 With leathern girdle braced;
 For all might see the bottle-necks
 Still dangling at his waist.

130

Thus all through merry Islington
 These gambols he did play,
 Until he came unto the Wash
 Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about
 On both sides of the way,
 Just like unto a trundling mop,
 Or a wild goose at play.

140

At Edmonton his loving wife
 From the balcony spied
 Her tender husband, wondering much
 To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin! — Here's the
 house!"

They all at once did cry;
 "The dinner waits, and we are tired;" —
 Said Gilpin — "So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
 Inclined to tarry there!
 For why? — his owner had a house
 Full ten miles off, at Ware.

150

So like an arrow swift he flew,
 Shot by an archer strong;
 So did he fly — which brings me to
 The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
 And sore against his will,
 Till at his friend the calender's
 His horse at last stood still.

160

The calender, amazed to see
 His neighbour in such trim,
 Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
 And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
 Tell me you must and shall —
 Say why bareheaded you are come,
 Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
 And loved a timely joke;
 And thus unto the calender
 In merry guise he spoke:

170

"I came because your horse would come,
 And, if I well forebode,
 My hat and wig will soon be here, —
 They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
 His friend in merry pin,
 Returned him not a single word,
 But to the house went in;

180

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
 A wig that flowed behind,
 A hat not much the worse for wear,
 Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus showed his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first;
For why? — they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring
back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back again:
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:

"Stop thief! stop thief! — a highway-
man!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king!
And Gilpin, long live he!
And when he next doth ride abroad
May I be there to see!

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM
[Publ. 1798]

OH that those lips had language! Life has
passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee
last.

Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smile
I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced
me;

Voice only fails, else how distinct they say.
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears
away!"

The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blessed be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the
same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here !
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own :
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she. 20

My mother ! when I learnt that thou
wast dead,

Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I
shed ?

Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just be-
gun ?

Perhap^s thou gavest me, though unfelt, a
kiss :

Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
Ah, that maternal smile ! It answers — Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window,
drew 30

A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !
But was it such ? — It was. — Where thou
art gone

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful
shore,

The parting word shall pass my lips no
more !

Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my
concern,

Of^t gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.

By expectation every day beguiled, 40
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.

Thus many a sad to-morrow came and
went,

Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learnt at last submission to my lot ;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er for-
got.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard
no more,

Children not thine have trod my nursery
floor ;

And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and
wrapped 50

In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,

'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our
own.

Short-lived possession ! but the record fair
That memory keeps, of all thy kindness
there,

Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly
laid ; 59

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and
glowed ;

All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no
fall,

Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and
brakes

That humour interposed too often makes ;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed
here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore
the hours,

When, playing with thy vesture's tissued
flowers,

The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the
while,

Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head
and smile),

Could those few pleasant days again ap-
pear, 80

Might one wish bring them, would I wish
them here ?

I would not trust my heart — the dear de-
light

Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might. —
But no — what here we call our life is
such

So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's
coast

(The storms all weathered and the ocean
crossed)

Shoots into port at some well-havened
isle,⁹⁰
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons
smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear be-
low,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers
gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached
the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows
roar."
And thy loved consort on the dangerous
tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy
side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,¹⁰⁰
Always from port withheld, always dis-
tressed—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest
tost,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and com-
pass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting
force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous
course.
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and
he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to
me.
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the
earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions
rise—¹¹⁰
The son of parents passed into the skies!
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has
run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is
done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er
again;
To have renewed the joys that once were
mine.
Without the sin of violating thine:
And, while the wings of Fancy still are
free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me
left.¹²¹

THE POPLAR FIELD

THE poplars are felled; farewell to the
shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colour-
nade
The winds play no longer and sing in the
leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image re-
ceives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took
a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where
they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are
laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me
a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from
the heat,¹⁰
And the scene where his melody charmed
me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no
more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at
my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its
stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything
can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments,
I see,
Have a being less durable even than he."

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL
GEORGE

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED

[Written Sept., 1782]

To the march in "Scipio."

TOLL for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset ;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete. 10

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought ;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock ;
She sprang no fatal leak ;
She ran upon no rock. 20

His sword was in its sheath ;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes !
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again 30
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON
NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1792

WHENCE is it, that amazed I hear
From yonder withered spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May ?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favour shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone ?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long 10
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee, in song ?

Or sing'st thou rather, under force
Of some divine command,
Commissioned to presage a course
Of happier days at hand ?

Thrice welcome then ! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky. 20

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make even January charm,
And every season Spring.

TO MARY

[Publ. 1793]

THE twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast ;
Ah, would that this might be the last !
My Mary !

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow ;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary !

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore, 10
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary !

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary !

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary ! 20

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream ;
Yet me they charm, whatever the theme,
My Mary !

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
 Are still more lovely in my sight
 Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary !

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
 What sight worth seeing could I see ?
 The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary !

Partakers of thy sad decline,
 Thy hands their little force resign;
 Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary !

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest
 That now at every step thou movest

Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary !

And still to love, though prest with ill,
 In wintry age to feel no chill,
 With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary !

But ah ! by constant heed I know,
 How oft the sadness that I show
 Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary !

And should my future lot be cast
 With much resemblance of the past,
 Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary !

ROBERT BURNS

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL

[Publ. 1786]

O Prince! O Chief of many thrond pow'rs!
That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war.
MILTON.

I

O THOU! whatever title suit thee —
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie —
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

II

Hear me, Auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me
An' hear us squeel.

III

Great is thy pow'r an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag, nor lame,
Nor blate, nor scaur.

IV

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners trying;
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

V

I've heard my rev'rend graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or, where auld ruin'd castles grey
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's wav
Wi' eldritch croon.

VI

When twilight did my graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yout the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

VII

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The star shot down wi' sklentiu light,
Wi' you mysel, I gat a fright:
Ayont the lough,
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' waving gugh.

VIII

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake;
When wi' an eldritch, stoor "quaick,
quaick,"
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistling wings.

IX

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

X

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirm in vain;
For O! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie's gaen
As yell's the bill.

XI

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen an' croose;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantraip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

XII

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
 An' float the jinglin icy boord,
 Then, water-kelpies haunt the foord,
 By your direction,
 An' nighted trav'lers are allur'd
 To their destruction.

70

XIII

And aft your moss-traversing spunkies
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
 The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

XIV

When Masons' mystic word an' grip
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest brother ye wad whip
 Aff straught to hell.

80

XV

Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard,
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
 The raptur'd hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry sward,
 In shady bow'r:

90

XVI

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
 Ye cam to Paradise incog,
 An' play'd on man a curs'd brogue
 (Black be your fa'!),
 An' gied the infant warld a shog,
 'Maist ruin'd a'.

XVII

D' ye mind that day when in a bizz
 Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
 Ye did present your smontie phiz
 'Mang better folk;
 An' sklent on the man of Uzz
 Your spitefu' joke?

100

XVIII

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
 An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
 While scabs an' botches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw;
 An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd wicked scaul —
 Was warst ava?

XIX

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
 Sin' that day Michael did you pierce
 Down to this time,
 Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

110

XX

An' now, Auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
 A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
 To your black Pit;
 But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
 An' cheat you yet.

120

XXI

But fare-you-weel, Auld Nickie-Ben!
 O, wad ye tak a thought an' men!
 Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
 Still hae a stake:
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake!

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

[Publ. 1786]

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

I

MY lov'd, my honor'd, much respected
 friend!

No mercenary bard his homage pays;
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and
 praise:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless
 ways;

What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
 Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier
 there I ween!

II

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh;
 The short'ning winter-day is near a
 close;

11

The miry beasts retreating frae the plough;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their
repose:

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes —
This night his weekly toil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his
hoes,

Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
homeward bend.

III

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree; 20
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher
through

To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise
and glee.

His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonillie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's
smile,

The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kinaugh and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and
his toil.

IV

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping
in,

At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the plough, some herd, some tentie rin 30

A cannie errand to a neebor town:

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman
grown,

In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her
e'e,

Comes hame; perhaps, to shew a braw
new gown,

Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hard-
ship be.

V

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters
meet,

And each for other's weelfare kindly
spiers:

The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd
fleet;

Each tells the uncos that he sees or
hears. 40

The parents partial eye their hopeful
years;

Anticipation forward points the view;

The mother, wi' her needle and her
sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaisht as weel's the
new;

The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI

Their master's and their mistress's com-
mand

The younkers a' are warn'd to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or
play:

"And O! be sure to fear the Lord al-
way, 50
And mind your duty, duly, morn and
night;

Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright."

VII

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha keus the meaning o' the
same,

Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her
hame.

The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires
his name, 60

While Jenny haffins is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae
wild, worthless rake.

VIII

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him
ben;

A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's
eye;

Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and
kye.

The youngster's artless heart o'erflows
wi' joy,

But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel be-
have;

The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can
spy 70

What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae
grave;

Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected
like the lave.

IX

O happy love! where love like this is found:

O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!

I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare:—

"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,

One cordial in this melancholy vale,

'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,

In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents
the ev'ning gale." 81

X

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!

That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjurd' arts! dissembling,
smooth!

Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?

Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,

Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?

Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their
distraction wild? 90

XI

But now the supper crowns their simple board,

The wholesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;

The soups their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her
cood;

The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,

To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck,
fell;

And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it
guid;

The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' liut was i'
the bell.

XII

The chearfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle
wide; 101

The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,

The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride.
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion
glide,

He wales a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with
solemn air.

XIII

They chant their artless notes in simple
guise,

They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
aim; 110

Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures
rise,

Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the
name;

Or noble *Elgin* beats the heaven-ward
flame,

The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:

Compar'd with these, Italian trills are
tame;

The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's
praise.

XIV

The priest-like father reads the sacred
page,

How Abram was the friend of God on
high;

Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage 120
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;

Or, how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging
ire;

Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;

Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred
lyre.

XV

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was
shed;

How He, who bore in Heaven the second
name,

Had not on earth whereon to lay His
head; 130

How His first followers and servants
sped;

The precepts sage they wrote to many a
land:

How he, who lone in Patmos banish'd,

Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd
by Heaven's command.

XVI

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal
King,

The saint, the father, and the husband
prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant
wing,"

That thus they all shall meet in future
days,

There, ever bask in uncreated rays, 140
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an
eternal sphere.

XVII

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's
pride,

In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart,
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will
desert,

The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart, 151
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the
soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor
enroll.

XVIII

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;

The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm re-
quest,

That He who stills the raven's clam'rous
nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the
best, 160
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with Grace Di-
vine preside.

XIX

From scenes like these, old Scotia's gran-
deur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd
abroad:

Princes and lords are but the breath of
kings,

"An honest man's the noblest work of
God;"

And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;

What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous
load, 169

Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness re-
fin'd!

XX

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!

For whom my warmest wish to Heaven
is sent!

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and
sweet content!

And O! may Heaven their simple lives
prevent

From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!

Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be
rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their
much-lov'd Isle. 180

XXI

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted
heart,

Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:

(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and re-
ward!)

O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament
and guard!

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH
THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

I

WEE, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!

Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle!

I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle!

II

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle 10
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
An' fellow mortal!

III

I doubt na, whyles, but thou mayst thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

IV

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin! 20
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith suell an' keen!

V

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell. 30

VI

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

VII

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving fore-sight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley, 40
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

VIII

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE
PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

I

WEK, modest, crimson-tipp'd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

II

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckl'd breast! 20
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

III

Could blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

IV

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield, 30
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

V

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies! 35

VI

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

VII

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On Life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!

Unakilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore, 40
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

VIII

Such fate to suffering Worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wretch'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

IX

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date; 50
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

TO A LOUSE

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET
AT CHURCH

I

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly,
I canna say but ye strut rarely
Owre gauze and lace,
Tho' faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

II

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her —
Sae fine a lady! 10
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

III

Swith! in some beggar's hauffet squattle:
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and
sprattle,
Wi'ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

IV

Now hand you there! ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils, snug an' tight; 20

Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it —
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bounet.

V

My sooth! right bauld ye set yer nose out
As plump an' grey as ouie grozet:
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie ye sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum. 30

VI

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On 's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do't?

VII

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad!
Ye little ken what curs'd speed
The blastie's makin! 40
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

VIII

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

SONG: COMPOSED IN AUGUST

I

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The gorsecock springs on whirring wings
Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
The moon shines bright, as I rove by night
To muse upon my charmer.

II

The pairick lo'es the fruitfu' fella,
The plover lo'es the mountains; 10
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
The soaring hern the fountains;

Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path o' man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

III

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine,
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
Tyrannie man's dominion!
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

IV

But, Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow,
The sky is blue, the fields in view
All fading-green and yellow:
Come, let us stray our gladsome way
And view the charms of Nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And ilka happy creature.

V

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
While the silent moon shines clearly;
I'll clasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I lo'e thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
Not Autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID

OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them ay thegither:
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither;
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caw in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature alight
For random fits o' daftin.
SOLOMON (Eccles. vii. 16)

I

O YE, wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebours' fauts and folly;
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heaped happier's ebbing still,
An' still the clap plays clatter!

II

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass dounce Wisdom's door
For glaikit folly's portals:
I for their thoughtless, careless sakes
Would here propone defences—
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the differ;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave;
That purity ye pride in;
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.

IV

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

V

See Social-life and Glee sit down
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmogrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O, would they stay to calculate,
Th' eternal consequences,
Or—your more dreaded hell to state—
Damnation of expenses!

VI

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases:
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

VII

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

VIII

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us:
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias: 60
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

A WINTER NIGHT

[Publ. 1786]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this piteous storm!
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?

SHAKESPEARE.

I

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and dour,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phoebus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

II

As night the storm the steeples rocked;
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked;
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl, 10
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl:

III

List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bid this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scour.

IV

Ilk happy bird — wee, helpless thing! —
That in the merry months o' spring 20
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chattering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

V

Ev'n you, on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost and sheep-cote
spoil'd

My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats! 30

VI

Now Phoebe, in her midnight reign,
Dark-muff'd, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow-solemn, stole: —

VII

“Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows 40
More hard unkindness unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumin'd Man on brother Man
bestows!

See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale:
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear, 50
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show —
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd —
Plac'd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile,
below!

Where, where is Love's fond, tender
throe,
With lordly Honor's lofty brow, 60
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone?
Mark Maiden-Innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares:
This boasted Honor turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising away,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing
pray'rs!

Perhaps this hour, in Misery's squalid nest,
 She strains your infant to her joyless
 breast,
 And with a mother's fears shrinks at the
 rocking blast!

VIII

"O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
 Feel not a want but what yourselves
 create,
 Think, for a moment, on his wretched
 fate,
 Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
 Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous
 call,
 Stretch'd on his straw, he lays himself to
 sleep;
 While through the ragged roof and chinky
 wall,
 Chill, o'er his slumbers piles the drift
 heap!
 Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
 Where Guilt and poor Misfortune
 pine!
 Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
 But shall thy legal rage pursue
 The wretch, already crush'd low
 By cruel Fortune's undeserv'd blow?
 Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
 A brother to relieve, how exquisite the
 bliss!"

IX

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
 Shook off the pouthery snaw,
 And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
 A cottage-rousing crow.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind
 Thro' all His works abroad,
 The heart benevolent and kind
 The most resembles God.

THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST

[Publ. 1786]

TUNE: *Roslin Castle*

I

THE gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
 Loud roars the wild inconstant blast;
 Yon murky cloud is filled with rain,
 I see it driving o'er the plain;

The hunter now has left the moor,
 The scatt'red coveys meet secure;
 While here I wander, prest with care,
 Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

II

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn
 By early Winter's ravage torn;
 Across her placid, azure sky,
 She sees the scowling tempest fly;
 Chill runs my blood to hear it rave:
 I think upon the stormy wave,
 Where many a danger I must dare,
 Far from the bonie banks of Ayr.

III

'Tis not the surging billows' roar,
 'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
 Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
 The wretched have no more to fear:
 But round my heart the ties are bound,
 That heart transpiers'd with many a wound;
 These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
 To leave the bonie banks of Ayr.

IV

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
 Her heathy moors and winding vales;
 The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
 Pursuing past unhappy loves!
 Farewell my friends! farewell my foes!
 My peace with these, my love with those—
 The bursting tears my heart declare,
 Farewell, my bonie banks of Ayr.

TAM O' SHANTER

A TALE

[Publ. 1791]

Of Brownie and of Bogillie fall is this Buke.
 GAWIN DOUGLAS.

Alloway Kirk was originally the church of the
quoad civilia parish of Alloway; but this parish
 having been annexed to that of Ayr in 1680, the
 church fell more or less to ruin, and when Burns
 wrote had been roofless for half a century.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
 And drouthy neebors neebors meet;
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate;
 While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 An' getting fou and unco happy,

We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
 (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
 For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam, had'st thou but been sae wise,
 As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
 She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
 A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
 That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
 That ilka melder wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
 That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied, that, late or soon,
 Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon,
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
 By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah! gentle dames, it gars me greet,
 To think how monie counsels sweet,
 How monie lengthen'd, sage advices'
 The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market-night,
 Tam had got planted unco right,
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
 And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
 His ancient, tru-y, drouthy cronie:
 Tam lo'd him like a very brither;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
 And ay the ale was growing better:
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious
 Wi' secret favours, sweet and precious:
 The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
 The storm without might rair and rustle,
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:

Kings may be blest but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread:
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
 Or like the snow falls in the river,
 A moment white — then melts for ever;
 Or like the borealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form
 Evanishing amid the storm.
 Nae man can tether time or tide;
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-
 stone,
 That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast
 in;
 And sic a night he takes the road in,
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
 The rattling showers rose on the blast;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
 Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
 That night, a child might understand,
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare Meg,
 A letter never lifted leg,
 Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
 Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots son-
 net,
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles catch him unawares:
 Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Where in the snaw the chapman snoor'd;
 And past the birks and meikle stane,
 Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
 And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
 Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,
 Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
 Before him Doon pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll:
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a breeze,
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquabae, we'll face the Devil!
 The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play; he car'd na deils a boddle. 110
 But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventur'd forward on the light;
 And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
 Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A wiunock-bunker in the east,
 There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast; 120
 A tousie tyke, black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge:
 He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
 And, by some devilish cantraip sleight,
 Each in its cauld hand held a light:
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table, 130
 A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns;
 Twa' span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
 A thief new-cutted frae a rape —
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
 Five tomahawks wi' bluid red-rusted;
 Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
 A garter which a babe had strangled;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled —
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
 The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft; 140
 Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;

The piper loud and louder blew,
 The dancers quick and quicker flew,
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they
 cleekit,
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies to the wark,
 And linket at it in her sark! 150

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
 A' plump and strapping in their teens!
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
 Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen! —

Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
 I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies
 For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal, 160
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach!

But Tam kend what was what fu' braw-
 lie:

There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,
 That night eulisted in the core,
 Lang after kend on Carrick shore
 (For monie a beast to dead she shot,
 An' perish'd monie a bonie boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
 And kept the country-side in fear). 170
 Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vauntie. . . .
 Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
 That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
 Wi' twa pund Scots ('t was a' her riches),
 Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
 Sic flights are far beyond her power: 180
 To sing how Nannie lap and flang
 (A souple jad she was and strang),
 And how Tam stood like aye bewitch'd,
 And thought his very een enrich'd;
 Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
 And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main;
 Till first ae caper, syne anither,
 Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
 And in an instant all was dark; 190
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
 When plundering herds assail their byke;
 As open pussie's mortal foes,
 When, pop! she starts before their nose;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud:
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' monie an eldritch skrie and hollo. 200

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy
 fairin!
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!

In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin !
 Kate soon will be a weofu' woman !
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
 And win the key-stane of the brig;
 There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they dare na cross !
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The flent a tail she had to shake; 210
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,
 But left behind her ain grey tail:
 The carlin clautht her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed: 220
 Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
 Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
 Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

And send the godly in a pet to pray. FORM.

ARGUMENT

Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a seasonal process with a gentleman in Mauchline—a Mr. Gavin Hamilton—Holy Willie and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. On losing his process, the muse overheard him at his devotions, as follows."

I

O THOU that in the Heavens does dwell,
 Wha, as it pleases best Thyself,
 Sends ane to Heaven an' ten to Hell
 A' for Thy glory,
 And no for onie guid or ill
 They've done before Thee !

II

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
 When thousands Thou hast left in night,
 That I am here before Thy sight,
 For gifts an' grace 10
 A burning and a shining light
 To a' this place.

III

What was I, or my generation,
 That I should get sic exaltation ?
 I, wha deserv'd most just damnation
 For broken laws
 Sax thousand years ere my creation,
 'Thro' Adam's cause!

IV

When from my mither's womb I fell,
 Thou might hae plung'd me deep in hell 20
 To gnash my gums, and weep, and wail
 In burning lakes,
 Whare damnd devils roar and yell,
 Chain'd to their stakes.

V

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
 To show Thy grace is great and ample:
 I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
 Strong as a rock,
 A guide, a buckler, and example
 To a' Thy flock ! 20

VI

But yet, O Lord ! confess I must:
 At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
 An' sometimes, too, in warldly trust,
 Vile self gets in;
 But Thou remembers we are dust,
 Defiled wi' sin.

VII

O Lord ! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg—
 Thy pardon I sincerely beg—
 O, may 't ne'er be a living plague
 To my dishonour ! 20
 An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
 Again upon her.

VIII

Besides, I farther maun avow—
 Wi' Leezie's lass, three times, I trow—
 But, Lord, that Friday I was fou,
 When I cam near her,
 Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
 Wad never steer her.

IX

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
 Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn, 20
 Lest he owre proud and high should turn
 That he's sae gifted:
 If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne
 Until Thou lift it.

X

Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
 For here Thou has a chosen race !
 But God confound their stubborn face
 An' blast their name,
 Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
 An' open shame !

60

XI

Lord, mind Gau'n Hamilton's deserts:
 He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
 Yet has sae monie takin arts
 Wi' great and sma',
 Frae God's ain Priest the people's hearts
 He steals awa.

XII

And when we chasten'd him therefore,
 Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
 And set the warld in a roar
 O' laughin at us:
 Curse Thou his basket and his store,
 Kail an' potatoes !

70

XIII

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r
 Against that Presbyt'ry of Ay'r !
 Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
 Upo' their heads !
 Lord, visit them, an' dinna spare,
 For their misdeeds !

XIV

O Lord, my God ! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
 My vera heart and flesh are quakin
 To think how we stood sweetin, shakin,
 An' pish'd wi' dread,
 While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,
 Held up his head.

80

XV

Lord, in Thy dav o' vengeance try him !
 Lord, visit him wha did employ him !
 And pass not in Thy mercy by them,
 Nor hear their pray'r,
 But for Thy people's sake destroy them,
 An' dinna spare !

90

XVI

But, Lord, remember me and mine
 Wi' mercies temporal and divine,
 That I for grace an' gear may shine
 Excell'd by nane;
 And a' the glory shall be Thine —
 Amen, Amen !

A ROSE-BUD, BY MY EARLY WALK

"This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruickshank, only child to my worthy friend Mr. Wm. Cruickshank, of the High School, Edinburgh. The air is by David Sillar, *quodam* merchant, and now schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the 'Davie' to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of *The Cherry and the Slae*." (R. B.)

I

A ROSE-BUD, by my early walk
 Adown a corn-inclosed haw, k,
 Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
 All on a dewy morning.
 Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
 In a' its crimson glory spread
 And drooping rich the dewy head,
 It scents the early morning.

II

Within the bush her covert nest
 A little linnet fondly preat,
 The dew sat chilly on her breast,
 Sae early in the morning.
 She soon shall see her tender brood,
 The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
 Among the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
 Awake the early morning.

III

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
 On trembling string or vocal air
 Shall sweetly pay the tender care
 That teuts thy early morning !
 So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
 Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
 And bless the parent's evening ray
 That watch'd thy early morning !

THE SILVER TASSIE

"This air is Oswald's; the first half stanza : —

"Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
 And fill it in a silver tassie,
 That I may drink before I go
 A service to my bonie lassie : " —

is old ; the rest is mine." (R. B.)

I

Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine,
 And fill it in a silver tassie,
 That I may drink before I go
 A service to my bonie lassie !

The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Fu' loud the wind blows frae the Ferry,
The ship rides by the Berwick-Law,
And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

II

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready, 10
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes deep and bloody.
It's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry,
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar:
It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary!

OF A' THE AIRTS

"The air is by Marshall; the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. N. B. It was during the honeymoon." (R. B.)

I

Or a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between,
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

II

I see her in the dewy flowers —
I see her sweet and fair. 10
I hear her in the tunefu' birds —
I hear her charm the air.
There's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

"The first half stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine." (R. B.)

CHORUS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is
not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the
deer,

A-chasing the wild deer and following the
roe —
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I
go!

I

FAREWELL to the Highlands, farewell to
the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of
worth!
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love

II

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd
with snow,
Farewell to the straths and green valleys
below, 10
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging
woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring
floods!

CHORUS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is
not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the
deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the
roe —
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever
I go!

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

I

JOHN ANDERSON my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was bent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw,
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo!

II

John Anderson my jo, John, 10
We clamb the hill thegither,
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo!

THOU LINGERING STAR

[Publ. 1789]

I

THOU ling'ring star with less'ning ray,
 That lov'st to greet the early morn,
 Again thou usher'st in the day
 My Mary from my soul was torn.
 O Mary, dear departed shade!
 Where is thy place of blissful rest?
 See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his
 breast?

II

That sacred hour can I forget,
 Can I forget the hallow'd grove, 20
 Where, by the winding Ayr, we met
 To live one day of parting love?
 Eternity cannot efface
 Those records dear of transports past,
 Thy image at our last embrace —
 Ah! little thought we 't was our last!

III

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
 O'erhung with wild woods thickening
 green;
 The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
 'Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd
 scene; 20
 The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
 The birds sang love on every spray,
 Till too, too soon, the glowing west
 Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

IV

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
 And fondly broods with miser-care.
 Time but th' impression stronger makes,
 As streams their channels deeper wear.
 O Mary, dear departed shade!
 Where is thy place of blissful rest? 30
 See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his
 breast?

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O'MAUT

[Publ. 1789]

"The air is Masterton's; the song mine. The occasion of it was this: Mr. Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn

vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan (who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton) and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business." (R. B.)

CHORUS

WE are na fou, we're nae that fou,
 But just a drappie in our e'e!
 The cock may crawl, the day may daw,
 And ay we'll taste the barley-bree!

I

O, WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
 And Rob and Allan cam to see.
 Three blyther hearts that lee-lang night
 Ye wad na found in Christendie.

II

Here are we met three merry boys,
 Three merry boys I trow are we; 10
 And monie a night we've merry been,
 And monie mae we hope to be!

III

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
 That's blinkin in the lift sae hie:
 She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
 But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

IV

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
 A cuckold, coward loun is he!
 Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
 He is the King amang us three! 20

CHORUS

WE are na fou, we're nae that fou,
 But just a drappie in our e'e!
 The cock may crawl, the day may daw,
 And ay we'll taste the barley-bree!

AE FOND KISS

I

AE fond kiss, and then we sever!
 Ae farewell, and then forever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
 Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
 While the star of hope she leaves him?
 Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
 Dark despair around benights me.

II

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy:
 Naething could resist my Nancy! 10
 But to see her was to love her,
 Love but her, and love for ever.
 Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
 Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
 Never met — or never parted —
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

III

Fare-the-weel, thou first and fairest!
 Fare-the-weel, thou best and dearest!
 Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
 Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure! 20
 As fond kiss, and then we sever!
 As farewell, alas, for ever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

THE BANKS O' DOON

I

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
 How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
 How can ye chant, ye little birds,
 And I sae weary fu' o' care!
 Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling
 bird,
 That wantons thro' the flowering thorn!
 Thou minds me o' departed joys,
 Departed never to return.

II

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
 To see the rose and woodbine twine, 10
 And ilka bird sang o' its love,
 And fondly sae did I o' mine.
 Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
 Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
 And my fae's lover staw my rose —
 But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' TH'
EXCISEMAN

CHORUS

The Deil's awa, the Deil's awa,
 The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman!
 He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
 He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

I

The Deil cam fiddlin thro' the town,
 And danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman,
 And ilka wife cries: — "Auld Mahoun,
 I wish you luck o' the prize, man!"

II

"We'll mak our maut, and we'll brew our
 drink,
 We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man, 10
 And monie braw thanks to the meikle
 black Deil,
 That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman."

III

There's threesome reels, there's foursome
 reels,
 There's hornpipes and strathpeys, man,
 But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
 Was *The Deil's Awa wi' th' Exciseman*.

CHORUS

The Deil's awa, the Deil's awa,
 The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman!
 He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
 He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman! 20

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVER-
NESS

I

The lovely lass of Inverness,
 Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
 For e'en to morn she cries "Alas!"
 And ay the saut tear blin's her e'e: —

II

"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day —
 A wae fu' day it was to me!
 For there I lost my father dear,
 My father dear and brethren three.

III

"Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
 Their graves are grown green to see, 20
 And by them lies the dearest lad
 That ever blest a woman's e'e.

IV

"Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
 A bluidy man I trow thou be,
 For monie a heart thou hast made sair
 That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!"

A RED, RED ROSE

I

O, MY luvè is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my luvè is like the melody,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

II

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luvè am I,
And I will luvè thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

III

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun! 10
And I will luvè thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

IV

And fare thee weel, my only luvè,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luvè,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

AULD LANG SYNE

[Sent to Mrs. Dunlop, 17th December, 1788.]

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

I

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

II

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine, 10
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

III

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine,

But we've wander'd monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

IV

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne. 20

V

And there's a hand, my trusty fere,
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne!

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

COMIN THRO' THE RYE

CHORUS

O, JENNY's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry:
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

I

Comin thro' the rye, poor body,
Comin thro' the rye,
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

II

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the rye, 20
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?

III

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the glen,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need the warld ken?

CHORUS

O, Jenny's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry:
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye! 20

DUNCAN GRAY

[Enclosed to Thomson 4th December, 1792.]

I

DUNCAN GRAY cam here to woo
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!)
 On blythe Yule-Night when we were fou
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
 Maggie coost her head fu' high,
 Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
 Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh—
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

II

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!),
 Meg was deaf as Ailsa craig
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
 Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
 Grat his een baith bleer't an' blin',
 Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn—
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

III

Time and Chance are but a tide
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
 Slighted love is sair to bide
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
 "Shall I like a fool," quoth he,
 "For a haughty hizzie die?
 She may gae to — France for me!" —
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

IV

How it comes, let doctors tell
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
 Meg grew sick, as he grew hale
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
 Something in her bosom wrings,
 For relief a sigh she brings,
 And O! her een they spak sic things! —
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

V

Duncan was a lad o' grace
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!),
 Maggie's was a piteous case
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
 Duncan could na be her death,
 Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
 Now they're crouse and canty baith —
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

SAW YE BONIE LESLEY

[Publ. 1792]

I

O, SAW ye bonie Lesley,
 As she gaed o'er the Border?
 She's gane, like Alexander,
 To spread her conquests farther!

II

To see her is to love her,
 And love but her for ever;
 For Nature made her what she is,
 And never made anither!

III

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley —
 Thy subjects, we before thee!
 Thou art divine, fair Lesley —
 The hearts o' men adore thee.

IV

The Deil he could na skaith thee,
 Or aught that wad belang thee:
 He'd look into thy bonie face,
 And say: — "I canna wrang thee!"

V

The Powers aboon will tent thee,
 Misfortune sha'na steer thee:
 Thou'rt like themsel' sae lovely,
 That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

VI

Return again, fair Lesley,
 Return to Caledonie!
 That we may brag we hae a lass
 There's nane again sae bonie.

SCOTS, WHA HAE

[First published in *The Morning Chronicle*,
May, 1794.]

I

SCOTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
 Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
 Welcome to your gory bed
 Or to victorie!

II

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slavery!

III

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave? 10
Wha sae base as be a slave? —
Let him turn, and flee!

IV

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

V

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free! 20

VI

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty 's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

HIGHLAND MARY

[Sent to Thomson, 14th November, 1792.]

I

YE banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There Summer first unfold her robes,
And there the longest tarry!
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary!

II

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom, 10
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie:
For dear to me 's light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

III

Wi' monie a vow and lock'd embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursel's asunder. 20
But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

IV

O, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly;
And clow'd for ay, the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly! 30
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

IS THERE FOR HONEST
POVERTY

I

Is there for honest poverty
That tings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by —
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man 's the gowd for a' that.

II

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that? 20
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their
wine —
A man 's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

III

Ye see yon birkie ca'd "a lord,"
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He 's but a cuif for a' that. 20
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

IV

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, an' a' that!
 But an honest man's aboon his might —
 Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Their dignities, an' a' that, 30
 The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
 Are higher rank than a' that.

V

Then let us pray that come it may
 (As come it will for a' that)
 That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
 Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 It's comin yet for a' that,
 That man to man the world o'er
 Shall brithers be for a' that. 40

THERE WAS A LASS

I

THERE was a lass, and she was fair!
 At kirk and market to be seen
 When a' our fairest maids were met,
 The fairest maid was bonie Jean.

II

And ay she wrought her country wark,
 And ay she sang sae merrilie:
 The blythest bird upon the bush
 Had ne'er a lighter heart than she!

III

But hawks will rob the tender joys,
 That bless the little lintwhite's nest, 10
 And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
 And love will break the soundest rest.

IV

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
 The flower and pride of a' the glen,
 And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
 And wanton naigies nine or ten.

V

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
 He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down,
 And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist, 20
 Her heart was tint, her peace was stown!

VI

As in the bosom of the stream
 The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en,
 So, trembling pure, was tender love
 Within the breast of bonie Jean.

VII

And now she works her country's wark,
 And ay she sighs wi' care and pain,
 Yet wist na what her ail might be,
 Or what wad make her weel again.

VIII

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
 And did na joy blink in her e'e, 30
 As Robie tauld a tale o' love
 Ae e'enin on the lily lea?

IX

While monie a bird sang sweet o' love,
 And monie a flower blooms o'er the dale,
 His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
 And whisper'd thus his tender tale: —

X

“O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear.
 O, canst thou think to fancy me?
 Or wilt thou leave thy maimie's cot,
 And learn to tent the farms wi' me? 40

XI

“At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
 (Or naething else to trouble thee,
 But stray amang the heather-bells,
 And tent the waving corn wi' me.”

XII

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
 She had nae will to say him na!
 At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
 And love was ay between them twa.

MARY MORISON

[This was sent to Thomson, 20th March, 1793.]

I

O MARY, at thy window be!
 It is the wish'd, the trysted hour.
 Those smiles and glances let me see,
 That make the miser's treasure poor.

How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
 A weary alave frae sun to sun,
 Could I the rich reward secure —
 The lovely Mary Morison!

II

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
 The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha, 10
 To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard or saw:
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast of a' the town,

I sigh'd and said amang them a': —
 "Ye are na Mary Morison!"

III

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
 Or canst thou break that heart of his
 Whase only faut is loving thee? 20
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,
 At least be pity to me shown:
 A thought ungentle canna be
 The thought o' Mary Morison.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A NIGHT-PIECE

[Written 1798. Publ. 1815]

Composed on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, extempore. I distinctly recollect the very moment when I was struck, as described, — "He looks up — the clouds are split," etc.

— THE sky is overcast

With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground — from rock, plant,
tree, or tower.

At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up — the clouds
are split

Asunder, — and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel
away,

Yet vanish not! — the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; — still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,

Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

WE ARE SEVEN

— A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
— Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! — I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be
seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's
door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
"I was throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

[Publ. 1798]

"WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? — that light be-
queathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye — it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, wher'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"— Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME
SUBJECT

[Publ. 1798]

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blythe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless —
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

LINEs

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN
ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF
THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13,
1798

No poem of mine was composed under cir-
cumstances more pleasant for me to remember
than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern,
after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just
as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after
a ramble of four or five days, with my Sister.
Not a line of it was altered, and not any part
of it written down till I reached Bristol.

FIVE years have past; five summers, with
the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-
springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and con-
nect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these or-
chard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe
fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose them-
selves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little
lines

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral
farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of
smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless
woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his
fire

The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to
me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the
din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed
mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed
mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the
woods,

How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extin-
guished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,

The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the
sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I
was when first

I came among these hills; when like a
roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man ⁷⁰
Flying from something that he dreads,
than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature
sought then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone
by)

To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then
to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love, ⁸⁰
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is
past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other
gifts

Have followed; for such loss, I would be-
lieve,

Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-
times ⁹⁰

The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample
power

To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of
man;

A motion and a spirit, that impels ¹⁰⁰
All thinking things, all objects of all
thought,

And rolls through all things. Therefore
am I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we be-
hold

From this green earth; of all the mighty
world

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half
create,

And what perceive; well pleased to recog-
nise

In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the
nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and
soul ¹¹⁰

Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the
more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I
catch

The language of my former heart, and
read

My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once, ¹²⁰
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I
make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privi-
lege,

Through all the years of this our life, to
lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil
tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish
men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor
all ¹³⁰

The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we be-
hold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the
moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, ¹⁴⁰
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —

If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long ¹⁵¹
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,

That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,

And this green pastoral landscape, were to me

More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

THERE WAS A BOY

[Publ. 1800]

Written in Germany. This is an extract from the poem on my own poetical education. This practice of making an instrument of their own fingers is known to most boys, though some are more skilful at it than others. William Raincock of Rayrigg, a fine spirited lad, took the lead of all my schoolfellows in this art.

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs

And islands of Winander! — many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;

And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands

Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth

Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls, ¹⁰
That they might answer him. — And they would shout

Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, — with quivering peals,

And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud

Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause

Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung

Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise

Has carried far into his heart the voice ²⁰
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received

Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died

In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.

Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the church-yard hangs

Upon a slope above the village-school; ³⁰
And, through that church-yard when my way has led

On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute — looking at the grave in which he lies!

NUTTING

[Publ. 1800]

— It seems a day

(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;

When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,

A nutting-crook in hand ; and turned my
 steps
 Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure
 quaint,
 Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off
 weeds
 Which for that service had been husbanded,
 By exhortation of my frugal Dame —
 Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, — and,
 in truth,
 More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless
 rocks,
 'Through beds of matted fern, and tangled
 thickets,
 Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough
 Drooped with its withered leaves, ungrac-
 ious sign
 Of devastation ; but the hazels rose
 Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
 A virgin scene ! — A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the
 heart
 As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet ; — or beneath the trees I sate
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I
 played ;
 A temper known to those, who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blest
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose
 leaves
 The violets of five seasons re-appear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye ;
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
 For ever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And — with my cheek on one of those green
 stones
 That, fleeced with moss, under the shady
 trees,
 Lay round me, scattered like a flock of
 sheep —
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring
 sound,
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to
 pay
 Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure,
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and
 bough, with crash
 And merciless ravage : and the shady nook

Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being : and, unless I now
 Confound my present feelings with the
 past ;

Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees, and saw the intruding
 sky —

Then, dearest Maiden, move along these
 shades

In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand
 Touch — for there is a spirit in the woods.

“STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN”

[Publ. 1800]

STRANGE fits of passion have I known :
 And I will dare to tell,
 But in the Lover's ear alone,
 What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
 Fresh as a rose in June,
 I to her cottage bent my way,
 Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
 All over the wide lea ;
 With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
 Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot ;
 And, as we climbed the hill,
 The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
 Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
 Kind Nature's gentlest boon !
 And all the while my eyes I kept
 On the descending moon.

My horse moved on ; hoof after hoof
 He raised, and never stopped :
 When down behind the cottage roof,
 At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
 Into a Lover's head !
 “ O mercy ! ” to myself I cried,
 “ If Lucy should be dead ! ”

"SHE DWELT AMONG THE
UNTRODDEN WAYS"

[Publ. 1800]

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye !
— Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me !

"I TRAVELLED AMONG
UNKNOWN MEN"

[Publ. 1807]

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea ;
Nor, England ! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time ; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire ;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played ;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

"THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN
SUN AND SHOWER"

[Publ. 1800]

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
This Child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse : and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower, 10
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs ;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend ; 20
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run !
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene ; 40
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT
SEAL"

[Publ. 1800]

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
I had no human fears :
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ;
She neither hears nor sees ;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE

[Publ. 1800]

OfT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
— The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night —
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'T is scarcely afternoon —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his book,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept — and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
— When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

RUTH

[Publ. 1800]

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore —
 A military casque he wore, 20
 With splendid feathers drest;
 He brought them from the Cherokees;
 The feathers nodded in the breeze,
 And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
 But no! he spake the English tongue,
 And bore a soldier's name;
 And, when America was free
 From battle and from jeopardy,
 He 'cross the ocean came. 30

With hues of genius on his cheek
 In finest tones the Youth could speak:
 — While he was yet a boy,
 The moon, the glory of the sun,
 And streams that murmur as they run,
 Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth! I guess
 The panther in the wilderness
 Was not so fair as he;
 And, when he chose to sport and play, 40
 No dolphin ever was so gay
 Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
 And with him many tales he brought
 Of pleasure and of fear;
 Such tales as told to any maid
 By such a Youth, in the green shade,
 Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls — a happy rout!
 Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
 Their pleasant Indian town, 51
 To gather strawberries all day long;
 Returning with a choral song
 When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
 Their blossoms, through a boundless range
 Of intermingling hues;
 With budding, fading, faded flowers
 They stand the wonder of the bowers
 From morn to evening dews. 60

He told of the magnolia, spread
 High as a cloud, high over head!
 The cypress and her spire;
 — Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
 Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
 To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
 And many an endless, endless lake,
 With all its fairy crowds
 Of islands, that together lie 70
 As quietly as spots of sky
 Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
 A fisher or a hunter there,
 In sunshine or in shade
 To wander with an easy mind;
 And build a household fire, and find
 A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me!
 Our life were life indeed, with thee 80
 So passed in quiet bliss,
 And all the while," said he, "to know
 That we were in a world of woe,
 On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
 Fond thoughts about a father's love;
 "For there," said he, "are spun
 Around the heart such tender ties,
 That our own children to our eyes
 Are dearer than the sun. 90

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
 My helpmate in the woods to be,
 Our shed at night to rear;
 Or run, my own adopted bride,
 A sylvan huntress at my side,
 And drive the flying deer!

"Beloved Ruth!" — No more he said,
 The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
 A solitary tear:
 She thought again — and did agree 100
 With him to sail across the sea,
 And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
 We in the church our faith will plight,
 A husband and a wife."
 Even so they did; and I may say
 That to sweet Ruth that happy day
 Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
 Delighted all the while to think 110
 That on those lonesome floods,
 And green savannahs, she should share
 His board with lawful joy, and bear
 His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

120

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth — so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

130

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions linked to form so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

140

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

150

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

160

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world —
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

170

"No more of this; for now, by thee
Dear Ruth! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

180

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one, —
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

190

God help thee, Ruth! — Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her eup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May;
— They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

200

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

210

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves — she loved them still;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill 221
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day, 230
Be broken down and old:
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride. 240

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild —
Such small machinery as she turned 250
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child!

Farwell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

THE PRELUDE; OR, GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM

[Written 1799-1805. Publ. 1850]

BOOK I

[Lines 301-475]

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew
up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birth-place, and no
less
In that beloved Vale to which ere long
We were transplanted; — there were we let
loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain
slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had
snapped
The last autumnal crocns, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder
hung 310
To range the open heights where wood-
cocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half
the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation; — moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it be-
fell
In these night wanderings, that a strong
desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil 320
Became my prey; and when the deed was
done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and
sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less, when spring had warmed the
cultured Vale,
Moved we as plunderers where the mother-
bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though
mean
Our object and inglorious, yet the end

Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung ³³⁰

Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time

While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud
dry wind

Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not
a sky

Of earth—and with what motion moved
the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit
grows ³⁴⁰

Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling to-
gether

In one society. How strange, that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a
part,

And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned
to employ; ³⁵¹

Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless
light

Opening the peaceful clouds; or she would
use

Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cove, its usual home.

Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping
in ³⁶⁰

Pushed from the shore. It was an act of
stealth

And troubled pleasure, nor without the
voice

Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track

Of sparkling light. But now, like one who
rows,

Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge, ³⁷⁰
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey
sky.

She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a
swan;

When, from behind that craggy steep till
then

The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black
and huge,

As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck
again, ³⁸⁰

And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and
still,

For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I
turned,

And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my
bark,—

And through the meadows homeward went,
in grave

And serious mood; but after I had seen ³⁹⁰
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined
sense

Of unknown modes of being; o'er my
thoughts.

There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not
live

Like living men, moved slowly through the
mind

By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe! ⁴⁰⁰
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first
dawn

Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;

Not with the mean and vulgar works of
man,
But with high objects, with enduring
things—

With life and nature—purifying thus 410
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley
made

A lonely scene more lonesome, among
woods,

At noon and 'mid the calm of summer
nights,

When, by the margin of the trembling
lake, 420

Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twi-
light gloom,

I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me

It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud 430
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled
about,

Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with
steel,

We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding
horn,

The pack loud chiming, and the hunted
hare.

So through the darkness and the cold we
flew,

And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 440
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the
west

The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively

Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous
throng,

To cut across the reflex of a star 450
That fled, and, flying still before me,
gleamed

Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spin-
ning still

The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had
rolled

With visible motion her diurnal round! 460
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and
watched

Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry, when ye, through many a
year

Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and
hills, 470

Impressed, upon all forms, the characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth,
With triumph and delight, with hope and
fear,

Work like a sea?

BOOK II

[Lines 386-451]

My seventeenth year was come
And, whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess
In the great social principle of life
Coercing all things into sympathy, 390
To unorganic natures were transferred
My own enjoyments; or the power of truth
Coming in revelation, did converse
With things that really are; I, at this time,
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus while the days flew by, and years
passed on,

From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much, that all my thoughts

Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable 400
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth
still;

O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of
thought

And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and
sings,

Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that
glides

Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
Communing in this sort through earth and
heaven 411

With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.

One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
Find easier access to the pious mind, 420
Yet were I grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this
earth

So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was
born.

If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have
lived

With God and Nature communing, re-
moved 430

From little enmities and low desires —
The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
If, 'mid indifference and apathy,
And wicked exultation when good men
On every side fall off, we know not how,
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
Of peace and quiet and domestic love
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
On visionary minds; if, in this time 440

Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith

That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life — the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 't is yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou has
fed

My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find 450
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

BOOK III

[Lines 1-166]

RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE

It was a dreary morning when the wheels
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with
clouds,

And nothing cheered our way till first we
saw

The long-roofed chapel of King's College
lift

Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road
A student clothed in gown and tasselled
cap,

Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
Or covetous of exercise and air; 50

He passed — nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's
force.

Onward we drove beneath the Castle;
caught,

While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse
of Cam;

And at the Hoop alighted, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full
of hope;

Some friends I had, acquaintances who
there

Seemed friends, poor simple schoolboys,
now hung round 20

With honour and importance: in a world
Of welcome faces up and down I roved;
Questions, directions, warnings and advice,
Flowed in upon me, from all sides; fresh
day

Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed
A man of business and expense, and went

From shop to shop about my own affairs,
To Tutor or to Tailor, as befell,
From street to street with loose and care-
less mind.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I
roamed 30
Delighted through the motley spectacle;
Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students,
streets,
Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gate-
ways, towers:
Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,
A northern villager.

As if the change
Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and
hair
Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is
keen.
My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by, 40
With other signs of manhood that supplied
The lack of beard.—The weeks went
roundly on,
With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all with-
out
Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;
Right underneath, the College kitchens
made
A humming sound, less tuneable than
bees, 50
But hardly less industrious; with shrill
notes
Of sharp command and scolding inter-
mixed.
Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the
hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And from my pillow, looking forth by
light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood 60
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought,
alone.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's
room
All studded round, as thick as chairs could
stand,

With loyal students, faithful to their books,
Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,
And honest dunces — of important days,
Examinations, when the man was weighed
As in a balance! of excessive hopes, 70
Tremblings withal and commendable fears,
Small jealousies, and triumphs good or
bad —

Let others that know more speak as they
know.

Such glory was but little sought by me,
And little won. Yet from the first crude
days

Of settling time in this untried abode,
I was disturbed at times by prudent
thoughts,

Wishing to hope without a hope, some fears
About my future worldly maintenance,
And, more than all, a strangeness in the
mind, 80

A feeling that I was not for that hour,
Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast
down?

For (not to speak of Reason and her pure
Reflective acts to fix the moral law
Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian
Hope,

Bowing her head before her sister Faith
As one far mightier), hither I had come,
Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy
powers

And faculties, whether to work or feel.
Oft when the dazzling show no longer new
Had ceased to dazzle, oft times did I quit 90
My comrades, leave the crowd, buildings
and groves,

And as I paced alone the level fields
Far from those lovely sights and sounds
sublime

With which I had been conversant, the
mind

Drooped not; but there into herself return-
ing,

With prompt rebound seemed fresh as here-
tofore.

At least I more distinctly recognised
Her native instincts: let me dare to speak
A higher language, say that now I felt 100
What independent solaces were mine,
To mitigate the injurious sway of place
Or circumstance, how far soever changed

In youth, or to be changed in after years.
As if awakened, summoned, roused, con-
strained,

I looked for universal things; perused
The common countenance of earth and sky:
Earth, nowhere unembellished by some
trace

Of that first Paradise whence man was
driven;

And sky, whose beauty and bounty are ex-
pressed 110

By the proud name she bears — the name
of Heaven.

I called on both to teach me what they
might;

Or, turning the mind in upon herself,
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread
my thoughts

And spread them with a wider creeping;
felt

Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives 120

In glory immutable. But peace! enough
Here to record that I was mounting now
To such community with highest truth —
A track pursuing, not untrod before,
From strict analogies by thought supplied
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.

To every natural form, rock, fruits, or
flower,

Even the loose stones that cover the high-
way,

I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling: the great
mass 130

Lay imbedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward mean-
ing.

Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
From transitory passion, unto this
I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
Of passion; was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.
Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most
rich — 140

I had a world about me — 't was my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me,
And to the God who sees into the heart.
Such sympathies, though rarely, were be-
trayed

By outward gestures and by visible looks:
Some called it madness — so indeed it was,
If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
If steady moods of thoughtfulness matured
To inspiration, sort with such a name;
If prophecy be madness; if things
viewed 150

By poets in old time, and higher up
By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
May in these tutored days no more be seen
With undisordered sight. But leaving
this,

It was no madness, for the bodily eye
Amid my strongest workings evermore
Was searching out the lines of difference
As they lie hid in all external forms,
Near or remote, minute or vast; an eye
Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered
leaf, 160

To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
Could find no surface where its power
might sleep;

Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
And by an unrelenting agency
Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

BOOK III

[Lines 275-321.]

Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn
shade;

Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell
his tales

Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
Chosen by the Muses for their Page of
State —

Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded
heaven 280

With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft
pace,

I called him Brother, Englishman, and
Friend!

Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
Stood almost single; uttering odious truth —
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,
Soul awful — if the earth has ever lodged
An awful soul — I seemed to see him here
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth —
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks 320
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
And conscious step of purity and pride.

Among the band of my compeers was one
Whom chance had stationed in the very
room

Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate
Bard!

Be it confessed that, for the first time, seated
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
One of a festive circle, I poured out
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride
And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain ³⁰⁰
Never excited by the fumes of wine
Before that hour, or since. Then, forth I
ran

From the assembly; through a length of
streets,

Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door
In not a desperate or opprobrious time,
Albeit long after the importunate bell
Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra
voice

No longer haunting the dark winter night.
Call back, O Friend!¹ a moment to thy mind,
The place itself and fashion of the rites. ³¹⁰
With careless ostentation shouldering up
My surcease, through the inferior throng I
clove

Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood
On the last skirts of their permitted ground,
Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts!
I am ashamed of them: and that great Bard,
And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample
mind

Hast placed me high above my best deserts,
Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,
In some of its unworthy vanities, ³²⁰
Brother to many more.

BOOK IV

[Lines 256-338]

As one who hangs down-bending from
the side

Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast
Of a still water, solacing himself
With such discoveries as his eye can make
Beneath him in the bottom of the deep, ³⁶⁰
Sees many beauteous sights — weeds, fishes,
flowers;

Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies
more,

Yet often is perplexed, and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks and
sky,

¹ Ostrich-like, to whom The Prelude was addressed.

Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth
Of the clear flood, from things which there
abide

In their true dwelling; now is crossed by
gleam

Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
And wavering motions sent he knows not
whence,

Impediments that make his task more
sweet; ²⁷⁰

Such pleasant office have we long pursued
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
With like success, nor often have appeared
Shapes fairer or less doubtfully discerned
Than these to which the Tale, indulgent
Friend!

Would now direct thy notice. Yet in spite
Of pleasure won, and knowledge not with-
held,

There was an inner falling off — I loved,
Loved deeply all that had been loved be-
fore,

More deeply even than ever: but a swarm
Of heady schemes jostling each other,
gawds, ²⁸¹

And feast and dance, and public revelry,
And sports and games (too grateful in
themselves,

Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,
Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
(Of manliness and freedom) all conspired
To lure my mind from firm habitual quest
Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal
And damp those yearnings which had once
been mine —

A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given
up ²⁹⁰

To his own eager thoughts. It would de-
mand

Some skill, and longer time than may be
spared

To paint these vanities, and how they
wrought

In haunts where they, till now, had been
unknown.

It seemed the very garments that I wore
Preyed on my strength, and stopped the
quiet stream

Of self-forgetfulness.

Yes, that heartless chase
Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
For books and nature at that early age.
'T is true, some casual knowledge might be
gained ³⁰⁰

Of character or life; but at that time,

Of manners put to school I took small
note,

And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.
Far better had it been to exalt the mind
By solitary study, to uphold
Intense desire through meditative peace;
And yet, for chastisement of these re-
grets,

The memory of one particular hour
Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a
throng

Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons
staid, 310

A medley of all tempers, I had passed
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down;
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
Slight shocks of young love-liking inter-
persed,

Whose transient pleasure mounted to the
head,

And tingled through the veins. Ere we
retired,

The cock had crowed, and now the eastern
sky 320

Was kindling, not unseen, from humble
copes

And open field, through which the pathway
wound,

And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld — in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the
clouds,

Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean
light;

And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common
dawn — 330

Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the
brim

My heart was full; I made no vows, but
vows

Were then made for me; bond unknown to
me

Was given, that I should be, else sinning
greatly,

A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankful blessedness, which yet sur-
vives.

BOOK VI

[Lines 42-65]

The Poet's soul was with me at that time;
Sweet meditations, the still overflow
Of present happiness, while future years
Lacked not anticipations, tender dreams,
No few of which have since been realised;
And some remain, hopes for my future life.
Four years and thirty, told this very week,
Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me
Life's morning radiance hath not left the
hills,

Her dew is on the flowers. Those were
the days

Which also first emboldened me to trust
With firmness, hitherto but slightly touched
By such a daring thought, that I might
leave

Some monument behind me which pure
hearts

Should reverence. The instinctive humble-
ness,

Maintained even by the very name and
thought

Of printed books and authorship, began
To melt away; and further, the dread awe
Of mighty names was softened down and
seemed 64

Approachable, admitting fellowship
Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,
Though not familiarly, my mind put on,
Content to observe, to achieve, and to enjoy.

BOOK VI

[Lines 557-640]

Yet still in me with those soft luxuries
Mixed something of stern mood, an under-
thirst

Of vigour seldom utterly allayed:
And from that source how different a sad-
ness 560

Would issue, let one incident make known.
When from the Vallais we had turned, and
clomb

Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,
Following a band of muleteers, we reached
A halting-place, where all together took
Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our
guide,

Leaving us at the board; awhile we lin-
gered,

Then paced the beaten downward way that
led

Right to a rough stream's edge, and there
broke off;

The only track now visible was one 570

That from the torrent's further brink held
forth

Conspicuous invitation to ascend

A lofty mountain. After brief delay

Crossing the unbridged stream, that road
we took,

And clomb with eagerness, till anxious
fears

Intruded, for we failed to overtake

Our comrades gone before. By fortunate
chance,

While every moment added doubt to doubt,
A peasant met us, from whose mouth we
learned

That to the spot which had perplexed us
first 580

We must descend, and there should find the
road,

Which in the stony channel of the stream

Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;

And, that our future course, all plain to
sight,

Was downwards, with the current of that
stream.

Loth to believe what we so grieved to
hear,

For still we had hopes that pointed to the
clouds,

We questioned him again, and yet again;

But every word that from the peasant's
lips

Came in reply, translated by our feelings,
Ended in this,—*that we had crossed the*

Alps. 591

Imagination — here the Power so called
Through sad incompetence of human speech,
That awful Power rose from the mind's
abyss

Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
At once, some lonely traveller. I was
lost;

Halted without an effort to break through;

But to my conscious soul I now can say —

"I recognise thy glory:" in such strength
Of usurpation, when the light of sense 600

Goes out, but with a flash that has re-
vealed

The invisible world, doth greatness make
abode,

There harbours; whether we be young or
old,

Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;

With hope it is, hope that can never die,

Effort, and expectation, and desire,

And something evermore about to be.

Under such banners militant, the soul

Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no
spoils 610

That may attest her prowess, blest in
thoughts

That are their own perfection and reward,

Strong in herself and in beatitude

That hides her, like the mighty flood of
Nile

Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds

To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

The melancholy slackening that ensued

Upon those tidings by the peasant given

Was soon dislodged. Downwards we hur-
ried fast,

And, with the half-shaped road which we
had missed, 620

Entered a narrow chasm. The brook and
road

Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy strait,

And with them did we journey several
hours

At a slow pace. The immeasurable heights

Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,

The stationary blasts of waterfalls,

And in the narrow rent at every turn

Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and for-
lorn,

The torrents shooting from the clear blue
sky,

The rocks that muttered close upon our
ears, 630

Black drizzling crags that spake by the
way-side

As if a voice were in them, the sick sight

And giddy prospect of the raving stream,

The unfettered clouds and region of the
Heavens,

Tumult and peace, the darkness and the
light —

Were all like workings of one mind, the
features

Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;

Characters of the great Apocalypse,

The types and symbols of Eternity,

Of first, and last, and midst, and without
end. 640

BOOK VIII

[Lines 340-364]

Yet deem not, Friend ! that human kind
with me 340

Thus early took a place pre-eminent;
Nature herself was, at this unripe time,
But secondary to my own pursuits
And animal activities, and all
Their trivial pleasures; and when these had
drooped

And gradually expired, and Nature, prized
For her own sake, became my joy, even
then —

And upwards through late youth, until not
less

Than two-and-twenty summers had been
told —

Was Man in my affections and regards 350
Subordinate to her, her visible forms
And viewless agencies: a passion, she,
A rapture often, and immediate love
Ever at hand; he, only a delight
Occasional, an accidental grace,
His hour being not yet come. Far less had
then

The inferior creatures, beast or bird, at-
tuned

My spirit to that gentleness of love,
(Though they had long been carefully ob-
served),

Won from me those minute obeisances 360
Of tenderness, which I may number now
With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on
these

The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
Or grandeur circumscribe them to no end.

BOOK XIV

[Lines 1-129]

CONCLUSION

In one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance !) through the
Northern tracts

Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the
sun

Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the
door

Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who
attends

The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty
guide;
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied
forth. 20

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer
night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the
sky;

But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us
round,

And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private
thoughts :

Thus did we breast the ascent, and by my-
self

Was nothing either seen or heard that
checked 20

Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the
crag,

Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog,
teased

His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it
seemed

In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set

Against an enemy, I panted up 20

With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.

Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the
band;

When at my feet the ground appeared to
brighten,

And with a step or two seemed brighter
still;

Nor was time given to ask or learn the
cause,

For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and lo ! as I looked up
The Moon hung naked in a firmament 20
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.

A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory
shapes,

Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment
none 50

Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a
rift —

Not distant from the shore whereon we
stood,

A fixed, abyssal, gloomy, breathing-place —
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents,
streams

Innumerable, roaring with one voice! 60
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night
And three chance human wanderers, in calm
thought

Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.

There I beheld the emblem of a mind 70
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
(Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by putting
forth,

'Mid circumstances awful and sublime, 80
That mutual domination which she loves
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That men, least sensitive, see, hear, per-
ceive,

And cannot choose but feel. The power,
which all

Acknowledge when thus moved, which Na-
ture thus

To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their
own. 90

This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe:
They from their native selves can send
abroad

Kindred mutations; for themselves create
A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns
Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery,
Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
Of harmony from Heaven's remotest
spheres.

Them the enduring and the transient both
Serve to exalt; they build up greatest
things 100

From least suggestions; ever on the watch,
Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
They need not extraordinary calls

To rouse them; in a world of life they
live,

By sensible impressions not enthralled,
But by their quickening impulse made more
prompt

To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
And with the generations of mankind
Spread over time, past, present, and to
come, 110

Age after age, till Time shall be no more.
Such minds are truly from the Deity,
For they are Powers; and hence the high-
est bliss

That flesh can know is theirs — the con-
sciousness

Of Whom they are, habitually infused
Through every image and through every
thought,

And all affections by communion raised
From earth to heaven, from human to di-
vine;

Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
Whether discursive or intuitive; 120
Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
Emotions which best foresight need not fear,
Most worthy then of trust when most in-
tense.

Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that
crush

Our hearts — if here the words of Holy
Writ

May with fit reverence be applied — that
peace

Which passeth understanding, that repose
In moral judgments which from this pure
source

Must come, or will by man be sought in
vain.

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

[Publ. 1800]

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll,

You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent

The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.

But, courage! for around that boisterous
brook

The mountains have all opened out themselves,

And made a hidden valley of their own.

No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones,
and kites

That overhead are sailing in the sky.

It is in truth an utter solitude;

Nor should I have made mention of this
Dell

But for one object which you might pass
by,

Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unheven
stones!

And to that simple object appertains

A story — unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and
hills

Where was their occupation and abode.

And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
For passions that were not my own, and
think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)

On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his
name;

An old man, stout of heart, and strong of
limb.

His bodily frame had been from youth to
age

Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all
winds,

Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the
South

Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for
me!"

And, truly, at all times, the storm, that
drives

The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the
heights.

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose

That the green valleys, and the streams and
rocks,

Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's
thoughts.

Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
breathed

The common air; hills, which with vigorous
step

He had so often climbed; which had
impressed

So many incidents upon his mind 65
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills — what could they
less? had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in single
nests.

His Helpmate was a comely matron, old —
Though younger than himself full twenty
years. 80

She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels
she had

Of antique form; this large, for spinning
wool;

That small, for flax; and if one wheel had
rest

It was because the other was at work.

The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old, — in shepherd's
phrase,

With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many
a storm, 91

The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even
then,

Their labour did not cease; unless when
all

Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and
there,

Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed
milk, 100

Sat round the basket piled with oaten
cakes,

And their plain home-made cheese. Yet
when the meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was
named)

And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to
card

Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or re-
pair

Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's
edge, 110

That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection over-
browed

Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a
lamp;

An aged utensil, which had performed

Service beyond all others of its kind.

Early at evening did it burn — and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had
found,

And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with
hopes, 121

Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his
eighteenth year,

There by the light of this old lamp they
sate,

Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar
work,

Making the cottage through the silent
hours

Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life 130

That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it
chanced,

Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and
south,

High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE
EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of
years, 140

The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must
needs

Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's
heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear —
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood
of all —

Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
thoughts.

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For often-
times

Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use

Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind, ¹⁶¹
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's
stool

Sate with a fettered sheep before him
stretched

Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of
shade,

Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the
sun,

Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it
bears.

There, while they two were sitting in the
shade, ¹⁷⁰

With others round them, earnest all and
blithe,

Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath
the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the
boy grew up

A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut ¹⁸⁰
With his own hand a sapling, which he
hooped

With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe, ¹⁹⁰
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which
staff, or voice,

Or looks, or threatening gestures, could
perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old,
could stand

Against the mountain blasts; and to the
heights,

Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,

He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved
before

Were dearer now? that from the Boy there
came ²⁰⁰

Feelings and emanations — things which
were

Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born
again?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew
up!

And now, when he had reached his eight-
eenth year,

He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household
lived

From day to day, to Michael's ear there
came

Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been
bound ²¹⁰

In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for
claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. ²²⁰
As soon as he had armed himself with
strength

To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy
years,

And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of
ours ²³⁰

Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,

There are ten thousand to whom loss like
this ²³⁹

Had been no sorrow. I forgive him; — but
'T were better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.

Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman — he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade — and Luke to him shall
go, ²⁵⁰

And with his kinsman's help and his own
thrift

He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is
poor,

What can be gained? "

At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to
herself,

He was a parish-boy — at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings,
pence ²⁶⁰

And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours
bought

A basket, which they filled with pedlar's
wares;

And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous
rich,

And left estates and monies to the poor.
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel,
floored

With marble which he sent from foreign
lands. ²⁷⁰

These thoughts, and many others of like
sort,

Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was
glad,

And thus resumed: — "Well, Isabel! this
scheme

These two days, has been meat and drink to
me.

Far more than we have lost is left us yet.

— We have enough — I wish indeed that I

Were younger; — but this hope is a good
hope.

— Make ready Luke's best garments, of the
best

Buy for him more, and let us send him
forth ²⁸⁰

To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
— If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-
night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields
went forth

With a light heart. The Housewife for five
days

Was restless morn and night, and all day
long

Wrought on with her best fingers to pre-
pare

Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two
nights ²⁹⁰

Heard him, how he was troubled in his
sleep:

And when they rose at morning she could
see

That all his hopes were gone. That day
at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by them-
selves

Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not
go:

We have no other Child but thee to lose —
None to remember — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund
voice;

And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best
fare ³⁰⁰

Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house ap-
peared

As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman
came,

With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forth-
with ³¹⁰

He might be sent to him. Ten times or
more

The letter was read over; Isabel

Went forth to show it to the neighbours
round;

Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man
said,

"He shall depart to-morrow." To this
word

The Housewife answered, talking much of
things

Which, if at such short notice he should
go,

Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll,

In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,

For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's
edge

Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he
walked:

And soon as they had reached the place he
stopped,

And thus the old Man spake to him:—
"My Son,

To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full
heart

I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.

I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 't will do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should
touch

On things thou canst not know of. —
After thou

First cam'st into the world — as oft befalls
To new-born infants — thou didst sleep
away

Two days, and blessings from thy Father's
tongue

Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed
on,

And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural
tune;

While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month fol-
lowed month,

And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that
thou

Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's
knees.

But we were playmates, Luke: among
these hills,

As well thou knowest, in us the old and
young

Have played together, nor with me didst
thou

Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped
his hand,

And said, "Nay, do not take it so — I see
That these are things of which I need not
speak.

— Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself

Received at others' hands; for, though now
old

Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.

Both of them sleep together: here they
lived,

As all their Forefathers had done; and
when

At length their time was come, they were
not loth

To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life

they lived:

But, 't is a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.

These fields were burthened when they
came to me;

Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.

I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my
work,

And till these three weeks past the land
was free.

— It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me,

Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."

At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which
they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,

It is a work for me. But, lay one stone —

Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.

Nay, Boy, be of good hope; — we both may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four I still am strong and hale; — do thou thy part; 390

I will do mine. — I will begin again With many tasks that were resigned to thee: Up to the heights, and in among the storms, Will I without thee go again, and do All works which I was wont to do alone, Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless thee, boy!

Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast

With many hopes; it should be so — yes — yes —

I knew that thou could'st never have a wish To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me 400

Only by links of love: when thou art gone, What will be left to us! — But, I forget My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone, As I requested; and hereafter, Luke, When thou art gone away, should evil men Be thy companions, think of me, my Son, And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,

And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived, 410

Who, being innocent, did for that cause Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well —

When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see

A work which is not here: a covenant 'T will be between us; but, whatever fate Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last, And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,

And, as his Father had requested, laid The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420

The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart

He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept; And to the house together they returned.

— Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,

Ere the night fell: — with morrow's dawn the Boy

Began his journey, and when he had reached The public way, he put on a bold face; And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,

Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,

That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come, 431

Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news, Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout

"The prettiest letters that were ever seen." Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.

So, many months passed on: and once again The Shepherd went about his daily work With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now 439

Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour He to that valley took his way, and there Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began

To slacken in his duty; and, at length, He in the dissolute city gave himself To evil courses: ignominy and shame Fell on him, so that he was driven at last To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love; 'T will make a thing endurable, which else Would overset the brain, or break the heart: I have conversed with more than one who well 451

Remember the old Man, and what he was Years after he had heard this heavy news. His bodily frame had been from youth to age

Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,

And listened to the wind; and, as before, Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep, And for the land, his small inheritance. 459

And to that hollow dell from time to time Did he repair, to build the Fold of which His flock had need. 'T is not forgotten yet The pity which was then in every heart For the old Man — and 't is believed by all That many and many a day he thither went, And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen

Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog, Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.

The length of full seven years, from time
to time,⁴⁷⁰
He at the building of this Sheepfold
wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold; and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the EVEN-
ING STAR
Is gone — the ploughshare has been through
the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been
wrought
In all the neighbourhood: — yet the oak is
left
That grew beside their door; and the re-
mains⁴⁸⁰
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll.

"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN
I BEHOLD"

[Publ. 1807]

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

RESOLUTION AND INDE-
PENDENCE

[Publ. 1807]

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. This old
Man I met a few hundred yards from my cot-
tage; and the account of him is taken from
his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling
described in the beginning of the poem, while
crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's,
at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham.
The image of the hare I then observed on the
ridge of the Fell.

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;

Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove
broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie
chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise
of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; — on
the moors¹⁰
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she
doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and mel-
ancholy.²¹

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the
might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness — and blind thoughts, I knew
not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:³⁰
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me —
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant
thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come un-
sought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;

But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed
at all ? 43

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-
side:

By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency
and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, so
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had
striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore
grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and
whence; 60
So that it seems a thing endowed with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a
shelf
Of rock or sand reposeeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor
dead,
Nor all asleep — in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame
had cast. 70

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale
face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood

Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they
call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book: 81
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glori-
ous day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly
drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue ?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise 90
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid
eyes,

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest —
Choice word and measured phrase, above
the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man
their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor: 100
Employment hazardous and wearisome !
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor
to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice
or chance,
And in this way he gained an honest main-
tenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could
I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem

Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admon-
ishment.

112

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that
kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly
ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
— Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
“How is it that you live, and what is it you
do?”

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words re-
peat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and
wide
He travelled; stirring thus above his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
“Once I could meet with them on every
side;
But they have dwindled long by slow de-
cay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where
I may.”

120

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all
troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him
pace
About the weary moors continually, 130
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pur-
sued,
He, having made a pause, the same dis-
course renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with deaneanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to
find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
“God,” said I, “be my help and stay se-
cure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the
lonely moor!”

140

COMPOSED UPON WESTMIN-
STER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802

[Publ. 1807]

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples
lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless
air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE,
NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST 1802

[Publ. 1807]

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to
sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to
rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and
should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners,
drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she
lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

“IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVEN-
ING, CALM AND FREE”

[Publ. 1807]

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the
Sea:

Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with
me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn
thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

[Publ. 1807]

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the
worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength de-
cay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final
day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even
the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed
away.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

[Publ. 1807]

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his
plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless
den; —
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do
thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:

Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left be-
hind

Powers that will work for thee; air, earth,
and skies;

There's not a breathing of the common
wind

That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1802

[Publ. 1807]

This was written immediately after my re-
turn from France to London, when I could not
but be struck, as here described, with the vanity
and parade of our own country, especially in
great towns and cities, as contrasted with the
quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the
revolution had produced in France. . . .

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must
look

For comfort, being, as I am, oppress'd,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman,
cook,

Or groom! — We must run glittering like
a brook

In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household
laws.

LONDON, 1802

[Publ. 1807]

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this
hour:

England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and
bower,

Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;

And give us manners, virtue, freedom,
power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like
the sea:

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

[Publ. 1807]

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, un-
withstood,"

Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and
sands

Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the
tongue

That Shakspeare spake; the faith and
morals hold

Which Milton held. — In everything we are
sprung

Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"

[Publ. 1807]

WHEN I have borne in memory what has
tamed

Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts de-
part

When men change swords for ledgers, and
desert

The student's bower for gold, some fears
unnamed

I had, my Country! — am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou
art,

Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.

For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men:
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

TO THE DAISY

[Publ. 1807]

BRIGHT Flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprent?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

THE GREEN LINNET

[Publ. 1807]

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:

Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion !
 Thou, Linnet ! in thy green array,
 Presiding Spirit here to-day,
 Dost lead the revels of the May;
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
 Make all one band of paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment :
 A life, a Presence like the Air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too blest with any one to pair;
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
 That twinkle on the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover;
 There ! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
 A Brother of the dancing leaves;
 Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
 Pours forth his song in gushes;
 As if by that exulting strain
 He mocked and treated with disdain
 The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
 While fluttering in the bushes.

STEPPING WESTWARD

[Publ. 1807]

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"

"What, you are stepping westward?" —
 "Yea."

— T would be a *wildish* destiny,
 If we, who thus together roam
 In a strange Land, and far from home,
 Were in this place the guests of Chance:
 Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
 Though home or shelter he had none,
 With such a sky to lead him on ?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
 Behind, all gloomy to behold;
 And stepping westward seemed to be
 A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
 I liked the greeting; 't was a sound
 Of something without place or bound;
 And seemed to give me spiritual right
 To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
 Was walking by her native lake:
 The salutation had to me
 The very sound of courtesy:
 Its power was felt; and while my eye
 Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
 The echo of the voice enwrought
 A human sweetness with the thought
 Of travelling through the world that lay
 Before me in my endless way.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

[Publ. 1807]

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland Lass !
 Reaping and singing by herself;
 Stop here, or gently pass!
 Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
 And sings a melancholy strain;
 O listen ! for the Vale profound
 Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
 More welcome notes to weary bands
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands:
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ? —
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And battles long ago:
 Or is it some more humble lay,
 Familiar matter of to-day ?
 Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
 That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
 As if her song could have no ending;
 I saw her singing at her work,
 And o'er the sickle bending; —

I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

30

YARROW UNVISITED

[Publ. 1807]

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning

"Buak ye, buak ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Buak ye, buak ye, my winsome Marrow! —"

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow."

10

"There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?"

20

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
— Strange words they seemed of slight and
scorn
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

30

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple *frae* the rock,
But we will leave it growing."

O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

4

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow."

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!"

5

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly, —
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

6

TO THE CUCKOO

[Publ. 1807]

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

4

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be 30
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"

[Publ. 1807]

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay, 10
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles, 19
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;

A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light. 30

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"

[Publ. 1807]

Written at Town-end, Graamere. The Daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay: 20
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

ODE TO DUTY

[Publ. 1807]

This ode is on the model of Gray's Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune. Many and many a time have I been twitted by my wife and sister for having forgotten this dedication of myself to the stern lawgiver. Transgressor indeed I have been, from hour to hour, from day to day: I would

fain hope, however, not more flagrantly or in a worse way than most of my tuneful brethren. But these last words are in a wrong strain. We should be rigorous to ourselves and forbearing, if not indulgent, to others, and, if we make comparisons at all, it ought to be with those who have morally excelled us.

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eductus, ut non tantum recte facere possim, sed nisi recte facere non possum."

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God !
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power!
around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to
their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly,
if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:

My hopes no more must change their name.
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through
Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let
me live !

FIDELITY

[Publ. 1807]

The young man whose death gave occasion to this poem was named Charles Gough, and had come early in the spring to Paterdale for the sake of angling. While attempting to cross over Helvellyn to Grasmere he slipped from a steep part of the rock where the ice was not thawed, and perished. His body was discovered as is told in this poem. Walter Scott heard of the accident, and both he and I, without either of us knowing that the other had taken up the subject, each wrote a poem in admiration of the dog's fidelity. His contains a most beautiful stanza:—

"How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber,
When the wind waved his garment how oft didst thou start."

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts — and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The Dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:

Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December's snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes — the cloud —
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The Shepherd stood; then makes his way
O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appalled Discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the Shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear:
He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remember'd, too, the very day
On which the Traveller passed this way.

But hear a wouder, for whose sake
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.
The Dog which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This Dog had been through three months'
space
A dweller in that savage place.

Yea, proof was plain that, since the day
When this ill-fated Traveller died,

The Dog had watched about the spot, 66
Or by his master's side:
How nourished here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime;
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate!

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

[Publ. 1807]

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
— It is the generous Spirit, who, when
brought

Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish
thought:

Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always
bright:

Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent
to learn; 9

Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;

In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower,
Controls them and subdues, transmutes,
bereaves

Of their bad influence, and their good re-
ceives:

By objects, which might force the soul to
abate 19

Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable — because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more
pure,

As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.

— 'Tis he whose law is reason; who de-
pends

Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted
still

To evil for a guard against worse ill, 30
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,

He labours good on good to fix, and owes
 To virtue every triumph that he knows:
 — Who, if he rise to station of command,
 Rises by open means; and there will stand
 On honourable terms, or else retire,
 And in himself possess his own desire;
 Who comprehends his trust, and to the
 same

Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim; 40
 And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
 For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
 Whom they must follow; on whose head
 must fall,

Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
 Whose powers shed round him in the com-
 mon strife,

Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
 But who, if he be called upon to face
 Some awful moment to which Heaven has
 joined

Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
 Is happy as a Lover; and attired 5:
 With sudden brightness, like a man in-
 spired;

And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the
 law

In calmness made, and sees what he fore-
 saw;

Or if an unexpected call succeed,
 Come when it will, is equal to the need:
 — He who, though thus endued as with a
 sense

And faculty for storm and turbulence,
 Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
 To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
 Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be, 6:
 Are at his heart; and such fidelity
 It is his darling passion to approve;
 More brave for this, that he hath much to
 love: —

'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
 Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
 Or left unthought-of in obscurity, —
 Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
 Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not —
 Plays, in the many games of life, that one
 Where what he most doth value must be
 won: 7:

Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
 Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
 Who, not content that former worth stand
 fast,

Looks forward, persevering to the last,
 From well to better, daily self-surpass:

Who, whether praise of him must walk the
 earth

For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
 Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
 And leave a dead unprofitable name — &
 Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
 And, while the mortal mist is gathering,
 draws

His breath in confidence of Heaven's ap-
 plause:

This is the happy Warrior; this is He
 That every Man in arms should wish to be

"NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM"

[Publ. 1807]

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow
 room;

And hermits are contented with their cells;
 And students with their pensive citadels;
 Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
 Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for
 bloom,

High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
 Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
 In truth the prison, into which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
 In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs
 must be)

Who have felt the weight of too much
 liberty,
 Should find brief solace there, as I have
 found.

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE

[Publ. 1820]

CLOUDS, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
 Through the grey west; and lo! these
 waters, steeled

By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
 A vivid repetition of the stars;
 Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
 Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
 At happy distance from earth's groaning
 field,

Where ruthless mortals wage incessant
 wars.

Is it a mirror? — or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires? — But list! a voice is
near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through
the reeds,
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH
WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

[Publ. 1807]

THE world is too much with us; late and
soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our
powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid
boon!
The Sea that hares her boom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping
flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of
tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less
forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

"WHERE LIES THE LAND TO
WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?"

[Publ. 1807]

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship
must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry? — Neither friend
nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were
rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and
there

Crossing the waters) doubt, and something
dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

[Publ. 1807]

This was composed during my residence at
Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least
passed between the writing of the four first
stanzas and the remaining part. To the atten-
tive and competent reader the whole suffi-
ciently explains itself; but there may be no
harm in adverting here to particular feelings or
experiences of my own mind on which the struc-
ture of the poem partly rests. Nothing was
more difficult for me in childhood than to ad-
mit the notion of death as a state applicable to
my own being. I have said elsewhere —

"A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death!" —

But it was not so much from feelings of ani-
mal vivacity that my difficulty came as from
a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit
within me. I used to brood over the stories of
Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade my-
self that, whatever might become of others, I
should be translated, in something of the same
way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to
this, I was often unable to think of external
things as having external existence, and I com-
muned with all that I saw as something not
apart from, but inherent in, my own immate-
rial nature. Many times while going to school
have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself
from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At
that time I was afraid of such processes. In
later periods of life I have deplored, as we have
all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite
character, and have rejoiced over the remem-
brances, as is expressed in the lines —

"Obstinate questioning
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;" etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour
which invest objects of sight in childhood,
every one, I believe, if he would look back,
could bear testimony, and I need not dwell
upon it here: but having in the poem regarded
it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of
existence, I think it right to protest against a
conclusion, which has given pain to some good
and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate

such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove,
and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can
see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are
bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from
the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous
song,
And while the young lambs bound 20
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the
steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season
wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains
throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of
sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea 30
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival, 40
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it
all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's
arm:— 50
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
— But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is
gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it
 flows, 70
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the
 east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her
 own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's
 mind, 80
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born
 blisses,
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he
 lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's
 eyes ! 90
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human
 life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife; 100
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous
 stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth be-
 lie
 Thy Soul's immensity; 110
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal
 deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, —
 Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by; 121
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's
 height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou
 provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly
 freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

IX

O joy ! that in our embers 130
 Is something that doth live,
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive !
 The thought of our past years in me doth
 breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest —
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in
 his breast: —
 Not for these I raise 14
 The song of thanks and praise ;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal
 Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections, 150
 Which, be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,

Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to
 make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad en-
 deavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy, 160
 Can utterly abolish or destroy!
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling ever-
 more.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous
 song!
 And let the young Lambs bound 170
 As to the tabor's sound!
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May!
 What though the radiance which was once
 so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the
 hour
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the
 flower;
 We will grieve not, rather find 180
 Strength in what remains behind;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering;
 In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and
 Groves,
 Forebode not any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your
 might; 190
 I only have relinquished one delight
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the Brooks which down their chan-
 nels fret,

Even more than when I tripped lightly as
 they;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
 Is lovely yet;
 The Clouds that gather round the setting
 sun
 Do take a sober colouring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortal-
 ity;
 Another race hath been, and other palms
 are won. 200
 Thanks to the human heart by which we
 live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can
 give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for
 tears.

GIPSIES

[Publ. 1807]

YET are they here the same unbroken knot
 Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
 Men, women, children, yea the frame
 Of the whole spectacle the same!
 Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
 Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
 That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
 Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
 — Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours
 are gone, while I
 Have been a traveller under open sky, 210
 Much witnessing of change and cheer,
 Yet as I left I find them here!
 The weary Sun betook himself to rest; —
 Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
 Outshining like a visible God
 The glorious path in which he trod.
 And now, ascending, after one dark hour
 And one night's diminution of her power,
 Behold the mighty Moon! this way
 She looks as if at them — but they 220
 Regard not her: — oh better wrong and
 strife
 (By nature transient) than this torpid life;
 Life which the very stars reprove
 As on their silent tasks they move!
 Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
 In scorn I speak not; — they are what their
 birth
 And breeding suffer them to be;
 Wild outcasts of society!

SONG AT THE
FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLEUPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES
AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

[Publ. 1807]

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel
sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the
Song. —

The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent
long: —

"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.

Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,

For everlasting blossoming: 10

Both roses flourish, red and white:

In love and sisterly delight

The two that were at strife are blended,

And all old troubles now are ended. —

Joy! joy to both! but most to her

Who is the flower of Lancaster!

Behold her how She smiles to-day

On this great throng, this bright array!

Fair greeting doth she send to all

From every corner of the hall; 20

But chiefly from above the board

Where sits in state our rightful Lord,

A Clifford to his own restored!

They came with banner, spear, and shield,

And it was proved in Bosworth-field.

Not long the Avenger was withstood —

Earth helped him with the cry of blood:

St. George was for us, and the might

Of blessed Angels crowned the right.

Loud voice the Land has uttered forth, 30

We loudest in the faithful north:

Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,

Our streams proclaim a welcoming;

Our strong-abodes and castles see

The glory of their loyalty.

How glad is Skipton at this hour —

Though lonely, a deserted Tower;

Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and
groom:

We have them at the feast of Brough'm.

How glad Pendragon — though the sleep 40

Of years be on her! — She shall reap

A taste of this great pleasure, viewing

As in a dream her own renewing.

Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;

And she that keepeth watch and ward

Her statelier Eden's course to guard;

They both are happy at this hour,

Though each is but a lonely Tower: —

But here is perfect joy and pride 50

For one fair House by Emont's side,

This day, distinguished without peer

To see her Master and to cheer —

Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

Oh! it was a time forlorn

When the fatherless was born —

Give her wings that she may fly,

Or she sees her infant die!

Swords that were with slaughter wild

Hunt the Mother and the Child. 60

Who will take them from the light?

— Yonder is a man in sight —

Yonder is a house — but where?

No, they must not enter there.

To the caves, and to the brooks,

To the clouds of heaven she looks;

She is speechless, but her eyes

Pray in ghostly agonies.

Blissful Mary, Mother mild,

Maid and Mother undefiled, 70

Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy

On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?

No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass

Light as the wind along the grass.

Can this be He who hither came

In secret, like a smothered flame?

O'er whom such thankful tears were shed

For shelter, and a poor man's bread!

God loves the Child; and God hath willed 80

That those dear words should be fulfilled,

The Lady's words, when forced away,

The last she to her Babe did say:

'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest

I may not be; but rest thee, rest,

For lowly shepherd's life is best!'

Alas! when evil men are strong

No life is good, no pleasure long.

The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,

And leave Blencathara's rugged coves, 90

And quit the flowers that summer brings

To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;

Must vanish, and his careless cheer

Be turned to heaviness and fear.

— Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!

Hear it, good man, old in days!

Thou tree of covert and of rest

For this young Bird that is distress;

Among thy branches safe he lay,
 And he was free to sport and play, 100
 When falcons were abroad for prey.
 A recreant harp, that sings of fear
 And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
 I said, when evil men are strong,
 No life is good, no pleasure long,
 A weak and cowardly untruth!
 Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
 And thankful through a weary time,
 That brought him up to manhood's prime.
 — Again he wanders forth at will, 110
 And tends a flock from hill to hill:
 His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
 Such garb with such a noble mien;
 Among the shepherd grooms no mate
 Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
 Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
 Nor yet for higher sympathy.
 To his side the fallow-deer
 Came, and rested without fear;
 The eagle, lord of land and sea, 120
 Stooped down to pay him fealty;
 And both the undying fish that swim
 Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
 The pair were servants of his eye
 In their immortality;
 And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
 Moved to and fro, for his delight.
 He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
 Upon the mountains visitant;
 He hath kenned them taking wing: 130
 And into caves where Faeries sing
 He hath entered; and been told
 By Voices how men lived of old.
 Among the heavens his eye can see
 The face of thing that is to be;
 And, if that men report him right,
 His tongue could whisper words of might.
 — Now another day is come,
 Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
 He hath thrown aside his crook, 140
 And hath buried deep his book;
 Armour rusting in his halls
 On the blood of Clifford calls; —
 'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance —
 Hear me to the heart of France,
 Is the longing of the Shield —
 Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
 Field of death, where'er thou be,
 Grown thou with our victory!
 Happy day, and mighty hour, 150
 When our Shepherd, in his power,
 Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
 To his ancestors restored

Like a re-appearing Star,
 Like a glory from afar,
 First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not
 know
 How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's
 heart was framed,
 How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
 Was softened into feeling, soothed, and
 tamed. 160

Love had he found in huts where poor men
 lie;
 His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
 The silence that is in the starry sky,
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.
 In him the savage virtue of the Race,
 Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were
 dead:
 Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
 The wisdom which adversity had bred.
 Glad were the vales, and every cottage
 hearth;
 The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and
 more; 170
 And, ages after he was laid in earth,
 "The good Lord Clifford" was the name
 he bore.

THE EXCURSION

[Written 1795-1814. Publ. 1814]

TO THE RIGHT HON.
 WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K. G.
 ETC. ETC.

OFF, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
 In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent:
 And inured in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
 Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
 — Now, by thy care bedrilled, I appear
 Before thee, LORDSDALE, and this Work present,
 A token (may it prove a monument!)
 Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
 Gladly would I have waited till my task
 Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
 And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
 Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
 Thy favour: trusting that thou wilt not deem
 The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND.
 July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

THE Title-page announces that this is only a
 portion of a poem; and the Reader must be
 here apprised that it belongs to the second
 part of a long and laborious Work, which is to

consist of three parts. — The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which "The Excursion" is a part, derives its title of "The Recluse." — Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, "The Recluse"; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement. — The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen. — Nothing further need be

added, than that the first and third parts of "The Recluse" will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part ("The Excursion") the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

BOOK I

[Lines 463-916]

My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot

Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned

Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench;

And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,

I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak. "I see around me here

Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,

Nor we alone, but that which each man loved

And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon

Even of the good is no memorial left.

— The Poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams, to mourn,

And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,

In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power 480
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,

That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside you spring
I stood,

And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond

Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up

In mortal stillness; and they ministered 490
To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,

Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied

The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject
only

To the soft handling of the elements:
There let it lie — how foolish are such
thoughts!

Forgive them; — never — never did my
steps

Approach this door but she who dwelt
within

A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved
her

As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die
first, 500

And they whose hearts are dry as sum-
mer dust

Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle
looks,

When she upheld the cool refreshment
drawn

From that forsaken spring; and no one
came

But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is
dead,

The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave. 510

I speak," continued he, "of One whose
stock

Of virtues bloomed beneath this lonely
roof.

She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with
the joy

Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.

Her wedded Partner lacked not on his
side 520

The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would
tell

That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass, — in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished. — They
who passed

At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would
ply,

After his daily work, until the light 53
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were
lost

In the dark hedges. So their days were
spent

In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in
heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there
came

Two blighting seasons, when the fields were
left

With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to
add

A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the
heart! 540

A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season: many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the
poor;

And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Mean-
while, abridged

Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calami-
tous years

With cheerful hope, until the second au-
tumn, 550

When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long; and, when his strength
returned,

He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. A second infant now

Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow; shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift 560

Sought daily bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children — hap-
pier far

Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
That makes her dwelling on the mountain
rocks!

A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in
peace,

This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them; or with his
knife

Carved uncouth figures on the heads of
sticks —

Then, not less idly, sought, through every
nook

In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
He mingled, where he might, the various
tasks

Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not; his good humour
soon

Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
And poverty brought on a petted mood 580
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work — and to the
town

Would turn without an errand his slack
steps;

Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his
babes,

And with a cruel tongue: at other times
He tosed them with a false unnatural joy:
And 't was a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. 'Every
smile,'

Said Margaret to me, here beneath these
trees, 590
'Made my heart bleed.' "

At this the Wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, " 'T is now the hour of deepest
noon.

At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at
rest

Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air ;
Why should a tear be on an old Man's
cheek ?

Why should we thus, with an untoward
mind,

And in the weakness of humanity, 600
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away ;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless
thoughts ? "

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale
Passed from my mind like a forgotten
sound. 610

A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had
rehearsed

Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now re-
laxed,

A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins;
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer
sun, 620

That had not cheered me long — ere, look-
ing round

Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my
sake,

He would resume his story.

He replied,
" It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose
hearts

Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to
draw

A momentary pleasure, never marked 630
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often
found

In mournful thoughts, and always might
be found,

A power to virtue friendly; were 't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer ! 'T is a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form. — But without further bid-
ding 640

I will proceed.

While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless
years,

Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote;
And when these lofty elms once more ap-
peared,

What pleasant expectations lured me on
O'er the flat Common! — With quick step
I reached

The threshold, lifted with light hand the
latch;

But, when I entered, Margaret looked at
me

A little while; then turned her head away
Speechless, — and, sitting down upon a
chair, 650

Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch!
at last

She rose from off her seat, and then, — O
Sir!

I cannot tell how she pronounced my
name: —

With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me, she en-
quired

If I had seen her husband. As she spake
A strange surprise and fear came to my
heart,

Nor had I power to answer ere she told 660
That he had disappeared — not two months
gone.

He left his house: two wretched days had
past,

And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This trem-
blingly

She opened — found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed, 670
Silver and gold. 'I shuddered at the
sight,

Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere
that day

Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been
sent

With the sad news, that he had joined a
troop

Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
— He left me thus — he could not gather
heart

To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and
sink 680

Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

This tale did Margaret tell with many
tears:

And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth
as served

To cheer us both. But long we had not
talked

Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.

We parted. — 'T was the time of early
spring; 690

I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she
looked,

And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy
thoughts.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and
cold,

Through many a wood and many an open
ground, 699

In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might be-
fall;

My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks' and whis-
pering trees,

And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that
passed between,
And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the
wheat

Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field
spread

Its tender verdure. At the door arrived, 710
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.

Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look, — only, it seemed,

The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that
bright weed,

The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take
root

Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,

And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost ⁷²¹
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and
thrift

Had broken their trim border-lines, and
straggled

O'er paths they used to deck: carnations,
once

Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting sup-
port.

The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths
and bells,

Had twined about her two small rows of
peas,

And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour
Was wasted. — Back I turned my restless
steps; ⁷³¹

A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I
sought,

He said that she was used to ramble far. —
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sat with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud;

Then, like a blast that dies away self-
stilled,

The voice was silent. From the bench I
rose;

But neither could divert nor soothe my
thoughts.

The spot, though fair, was very desolate —
The longer I remained, more desolate: ⁷⁴¹
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck
o'er

With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the
sheep,

That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows
fell

From these tall elms; the cottage-clock
struck eight; —

I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin — her figure,
too, ⁷⁵¹

Was changed. As she unlocked the door,
she said,

'It grieves me you have waited here so
long,

But, in good truth, I've wandered much of
late;

And sometimes — to my shame I speak —
have need

Of my best prayers to bring me back again.
While on the board she spread our evening
meal,

She told me — interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless
hands —

That she had parted with her elder child,
To a kind master on a distant farm ⁷⁶¹
Now happily apprenticed. — 'I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause; to-
day

I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,' said she, 'have done much
wrong

And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my
tears ⁷⁷⁰

Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.

But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that
God

Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'

It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'T is long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman: — so familiarly ⁷⁸⁰
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my
walks

A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One
By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have
grieved ⁷⁹⁰

Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward
were cast;

And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was
low,

Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind

Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the
fire 801

We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they
came.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God's good love, and seek his help by
prayer.

I took my staff, and, when I kissed her
babe,

The tears stood in her eyes. I left her
then 810

With the best hope and comfort I could
give:

She thanked me for my wish; — but for my
hope

It seemed she did not thank me.

I returned,

And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose
flower

Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the
Spring.

I found her sad and drooping: she had
learned

No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived; if he were
dead,

She knew not he was dead. She seemed
the same 820

In person and appearance; but her house
Bespoke a sleepy hand of negligence;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the
hearth

Was comfortless, and her small lot of
books,

Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner
panes

In seemly order, now, with straggling
leaves

Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant
Babe

Had from his Mother caught the trick of
grief, 830

And sighed among its playthings. I with-
drew,

And once again entering the garden saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her: weeds de-
faced

The hardened soil, and knots of withered
grass:

No ridges there appeared of clear black
mould,

No winter greenness; of her herbs and
flowers,

It seemed the better part was gnawed away
Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,

Which had been twined about the slender
stem 840

Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
The bark was nibbled round by trusty
sheep.

— Margaret stood near, her infant in her
arms,

And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' When to the
House

We had returned together, she enquired
If I had any hope: — but for her babe

And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must
die 850

Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place; his Sunday garments
hung

Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,

In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. 'She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these
wilds, and gained,

By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's
boy 861

To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,

And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her.
begged

That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted
then —

Our final parting; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned 870

Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years;
 From their first separation, nine long years,
 She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
 A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have
 been
 A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my
 Friend,
 That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
 Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day;
 And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
 The shade, and look abroad. On this old
 bench 879
 For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
 Was busy in the distance, shaping things
 That made her heart beat quick. You see
 that path,
 Now faint, — the grass has crept o'er its
 grey line;
 There, to and fro, she paced through many
 a day
 Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
 That girt her waist, spinning the long-
 drawn thread
 With backward steps. Yet ever as there
 passed
 A man whose garments showed the soldier's
 red,
 Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
 The little child who sate to turn the wheel
 Ceased from his task; and she with falter-
 ing voice 891
 Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
 Whose presence gave no comfort, were
 gone by,
 Her heart was still more sad. And by yon
 gate,
 That bars the traveller's road, she often
 stood,
 And when a stranger horseman came, the
 latch
 Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
 Most happy, if, from aught discovered
 there
 Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
 The same sad question. Meawhile her
 poor Hut 900
 Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose
 hand,
 At the first nipping of October frost,
 Closed up each clink, and with fresh bands
 of straw
 Chequered the green-grown thatch. And
 so she lived
 Through the long winter, reckless and
 alone;

Until her house by frost, and thaw, and
 rain,
 Was sapped; and while she slept, the
 nightly damps
 Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
 Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the
 wind,
 Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
 She loved this wretched spot, nor would for
 worlds 911
 Have parted hence; and still that length of
 road,
 And this rude bench, one torturing hope
 endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my
 Friend, —
 In sickness she remained; and here she
 died;
 Last human tenant of these ruined walls!"

BOOK VII

[Lines 395-481]

Almost at the root
 Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
 And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
 Oft stretches towards me, like a long
 straight path.
 Traced faintly in the greensward; there,
 beneath
 A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,
 From whom, in early childhood, was with-
 drawn 401
 The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
 From year to year in loneliness of soul;
 And this deep mountain-valley was to him
 Soundless, with all its streams. The bird
 of dawn
 Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
 With startling summons; not for his delight
 The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
 Murmured the labouring bee. When
 stormy winds 409
 Were working the broad bosom of the lake
 Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
 Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on
 elond
 Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
 The agitated scene before his eye
 Was silent as a picture: evermore
 Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he
 moved.
 Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
 Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
 Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side

Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he
swayed; 421

And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not: neither field nor flock he
owned:

No wish for wealth had place within his
mind;
Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or
care.

Though born a younger brother, need
was none

That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, mature in manhood, he be-
held 431

His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him; but he remained well
pleased,

By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family;
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fal-
len.

— Nor deem that his mild presence was a
weight

That pressed upon his brother's house; for
books

Were ready comrades whom he could not
tire; 440

Of whose society the blameless Man
Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
Even to old age, with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours; refreshed his
thoughts;

Beyond its natural elevation raised
His introverted spirit; and bestowed
Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter
night,

The stormy day, each had its own re-
source;

Song of the muses, sage historic tale, 450
Science severe, or word of holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of just men
Made perfect, and from injury secure.

— Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the
field,

To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain com-
plaint:

And they, who were about him, did not
fail

In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized
His gentle manners: and his peaceful
smiles, 460

The gleams of his slow-varying counte-
nance,

Were met with answering sympathy and
love.

At length, when sixty years and five were
told,

A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature: and a few short
steps

Of friends and kindred bore him from his
home

(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.

— Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful
grief; 470

Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates

How long, and by what kindly outward
aids,

And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.

— And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing
sound

Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;

And, at the touch of every wandering
breeze, 480

Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER 1814

AND is this— Yarrow? — *This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?

An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why? — a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings; 490
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings

And, through her depths, Saint Mary's
Lake

Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice —
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
M-ek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!

Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there —
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see — but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives —
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine —
Sad thought which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me — to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

TO A SKY-LARK

[Publ. 1827]

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares
abound?

Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and
eye

Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that mu-
sic still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a
flood

Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and
Home!

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET"

[Publ. 1827]

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have
frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this
key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the mel-
ody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's
wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camœns soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-
land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when
a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he
blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

YARROW REVISITED

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.,

AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP,
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS,
THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED

[Publ. 1835]

The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title "Yarrow Revisited" will stand in no need of explanation for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet
day,

Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while serene leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralled,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Briak Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly, —
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and chang-
ing;
If, then, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps — a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh ! while they minister to thee,
 Each vying with the other,
 May Health return to mellow Age
 With Strength, her venturous brother; 60
 And Tiber, and each brook and rill
 Renowned in song and story,
 With unimagined beauty shine,
 Nor lose one ray of glory !

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
 By tales of love and sorrow,
 Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
 Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
 And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
 Wherever they invite Thee, 70
 At parent Nature's grateful call,
 With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
 Such looks of love and honour
 As thy own Yarrow gave to me
 When first I gazed upon her;
 Beheld what I had feared to see,
 Unwilling to surrender
 Dreams treasured up from early days,
 The holy and the tender. 80

And what, for this frail world, were all
 That mortals do or suffer,
 Did no responsive harp, no pen,
 Memorial tribute offer ?
 Yea, what were mighty Nature's self ?
 Her features, could they win us,
 Unhelped by the poetic voice
 That hourly speaks within us ?

Nor deem that localised Romance
 Plays false with our affections; 90
 Unsanctifies our tears — made sport
 For fanciful dejections:
 Ah, no ! the visions of the past
 Sustain the heart in feeling
 Life as she is — our changeful Life,
 With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
 In Yarrow's groves were centred;
 Who through the silent portal arch
 Of mouldering Newark entered; 100
 And clomb the winding stair that once
 Too timidly was mounted

By the "last Minstrel," (not the last !)
 Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream !
 Fulfil thy pensive duty,
 Well pleased that future Bards should chant
 For simple hearts thy beauty;
 To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
 Dear to the common sunshine, 110
 And dearer still, as now I feel,
 To memory's shadowy moonshine !

THE TROSACHS

[Publ. 1835]

THERE 's not a nook within this solemn
 Pass,
 But were an apt confessional for One
 Taught by his summer spent, his autumn
 gone,
 That Life is but a tale of morning grass
 Withered at eve. From scenes of art which
 chase
 That thought away, turn, and with watchful
 eyes
 Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
 Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear
 than glass
 Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy
 quest,
 If from a golden perch of aspen spray
 (October's workmanship to rival May)
 The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
 That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught
 lay,
 Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest !

"IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY AND PAIN"

[Publ. 1835]

If this great world of joy and pain
 Revolve in one sure track;
 If freedom, set, will rise again,
 And virtue, flown, come back;
 Woe to the purblind crew who fill
 The heart with each day's care;
 Nor gain, from past or future, skill
 To bear, and to forbear !

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulis, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutia se contrahat ulmis, et tota subsidat in pusillis cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus. — T. BURNEY, *Archæol. Phil.* p. 68.

ARGUMENT

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancient Mariners came back to his own Country. [1798.]

PART I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and
glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are
opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is
set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holdshim with hisskinnyhand,
"There was a ship," quoth he. so
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-
beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering
eye —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years
child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a
stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient
man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

"The ship was cheered, the har-
bour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the
right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon —" 30
The Wedding-Guest here beat
his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the
hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her
goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his
breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient
man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

"And now the Storm-blast came,
and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking
wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping
prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow

Still treads the shadow of his
foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared
the blast,
And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist
and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came float-
ing by,
As green as emerald.

The land of
ice, and of
fearful
sounds where
no living
thing was to
be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy
clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts
we ken —
The ice was all between. 55

The ice was here, the ice was
there,
The ice was all around; 60
It cracked and growled, and
roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great
sea-bird,
called the Al-
batross, came
through the
snow-fog,
and was re-
ceived with
great joy and
hospitality.

At length did cross an Alba-
tross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian
soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-
fit;

The helmsman steered us thro'!

And lo! the
Albatross
proveh a
bird of good
omen, and
followeth the
ship as it re-
turned north-
ward through
fog and float-
ing ice.

And a good south wind sprung
up behind; 71
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or
play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or
shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through
fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-
shine."

The ancient
Mariner in-
hospitably
killeth the
pious bird of
good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee
thus! — 80
Why look'st thou so?" — "With
my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still
blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

His ship-
mates cry
out against
the ancient
Mariner, for
killing the
bird of good
luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the
bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird
to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the
fog cleared
off, they
justify the
same, and
thus make
themselves
accomplices
in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own
head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed
the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'T was right, said they, such
birds to slay, 101
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair
breeze con-
tinues: the
ship enters
the Pacific
Ocean, and
sails north-
ward, even
till it reaches
the Line.
The ship
hath been
suddenly be-
calmed.

The fair breeze blew, the white
foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails
dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor mo-
tion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Al-
batross be-
gins to be
avenged.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where 131
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with
legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, to reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and
white. 130

A Spirit had
followed
them: one of
the inviolable
inhabitants of
this planet,
neither de-
parted souls
nor angels;
concerning
whom the
learned Jew,
Josephus, and
the Platonic
Constantino-
politan,
Michael
Psellus, may
be consulted.
They are very
numerous,
and there is
no climate or
element with-
out one or
more.

The ship-
mates, in their
sore distress,
would fain
throw the
whole guilt
on the ancient
Mariner: in
sign whereof
they hang the
dead sea-bird
round his
neck.

And some in dreams assured
were
Of the Spirit that plagued us
so:
Nine fathom deep he had fol-
lowed us
From the land of mist and snow.
And every tongue, through utter
drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more
than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young! 140
Instead of the cross, the Alba-
tross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

There passed a weary time.
Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each
eye.

A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I be-
held
A something in the sky.

The ancient
Mariner be-
holdeth a
sign in the
element afar
off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist; 150
It moved, and moved, and took
at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and
veered.

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him
to be a ship;
and at a dear
ransom he
freeth his
speech from
the bonds of
thirst.

With throats unslaked, with
black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb
we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried. A sail! a sail! 161

A flash of
joy!

With throats unslaked, with
black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Grimace! they for joy did
grin,
And all at once their breath
drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror
follows. For
can it be a
ship that
comes on ward
without wind
or tide?

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no
more!
Hither to work us woe!
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-
flame; 171
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove
suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth
him but the
skeleton of
a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked
with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us
grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate
he peered
With broad and burning face.
Alas! (thought I, and my heart
beat loud) 181
How fast she nears and nears!

Are those her sails that glance
in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs
are seen as
bars on the
face of the
glaring Sun.
The spectre-
Woman and
her death-
mate, and no
other on
board the
skeleton-ship.
Like vessel,
like crew!

Are those her ribs through which
the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her
crew?
Is that a Death? and are there
two?
Is Death that Woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks
were free, 190
Her looks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death
was she,
Who thicks man's blood with
cold.

Death and
Life-in-Death
have died for
the ship's
crew, and she
(the latter)
wineth the
ancient
Mariner.
No twilight
within the
courts of the
Sun.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won!
I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars
rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the
sea, 201
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising
of the Moon,

We listened and looked side-
ways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick
the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp
gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one
bright star 210
Within the nether tip.

One after
another,

One after one, by the star-dogged
Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a
ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His ship-
mates drop
down dead.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless
lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on
the ancient
Mariner

The souls did from their bodie,
fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe! 221
And every soul, it passed me
by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART IV

The Wed-
ding-Guest
feareth that a
Spirit is talk-
ing to him!

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and
brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.¹

I fear thee and thy glittering
eye,
And thy skinny hand, so
brown!"—

But the
ancient Ma-
riner assur-
eth him of
his bodily
life, and pro-
ceedeth to
relate his
horrible pen-
ance.

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wed-
ding-Guest! 230
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth
the creatures
of the calm.¹

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy
things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth
that they
should live,
and so many
lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away; 24
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to
pray;
But ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and
made
My heart as dry as dust.

¹ For the last two lines of this stanza, I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned, and in part composed. [Note of S. T. C.]

7 I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the
sea and the sky ²⁵⁰
Lay like a load on my weary
eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse
liveth for him
in the eye of
the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from
their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked
on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to
hell

A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse, in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw
that curse, ²⁶¹
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fix-
edness he
yearneth to-
wards the
journeying
Moon, and
the stars that
still sojourn,
yet still move
onward; and
everywhere
the blue sky
belongs to
them, and is
their appoint-
ed rest and
their native
country and
their own na-
tural homes,
which they
enter unan-
nounced, as
lords that are
certainly ex-
pected and
yet there is a
silent joy at
their arrival.
By the light
of the Moon
he beholdeth
God's crea-
tures of the
great calm.

The moving Moon went up the
sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry
main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge
shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt al-
way
A still and awful red. ²⁷¹

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining
white,
And when they reared, the elfish
light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet
black,
They coiled and swam; and
every track ²⁸⁰
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty
and their
happiness.

He bleaseth
them in his
heart.

The spell
begins to
break.

O happy living things! no
tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from
my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on
me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could
pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and mak
Like lead into the sea. ²⁹¹

PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be
given!
She sent the gentle sleep from
Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of
the holy
Mother, the
ancient Ma-
riner is re-
freshed with
rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled
with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained. ³⁰⁰

My lips were wet, my throat was
cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my
dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my
limbs:
I was as light—almost
I thought that I had died in
sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth
sounds and
seeth strange
sights and a
commotion
in the sky
and the ele-
ment.

And soon I heard a roaring
wind:
It did not come anear; ³¹⁰
But with its sound it shook the
sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life;
And a hundred fire-flags sheen;

To and fro they were hurried
about;
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar
more loud,
✓ And the sails did sigh like
sedge;
And the rain poured down from
one black cloud; 320
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft,
and still
✓ The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some
high crag,
The lightning fell with never a
jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies
of the ship's
crew are in-
spired, and
the ship
moves on;

9 The loud wind never reached the
ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the
Moon
The dead men gave a groan. 330

10 They groaned, they stirred, they
all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a
dream,
To have seen those dead men
rise.

11 The helmsman steered, the ship
moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the
ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like life-
less tools —
We were a ghastly crew. 340

12 The body of my brother's son
stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one
rope,
But he said nought to me."

But not by
the souls of
the men, nor

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!

by demons of
earth or mid-
dle air, but by
a blessed
troop of an-
gelic spirits,
sent down by
the invocation
of the
guardian
saint

13 'T was not those souls that fled
in pain,
Which to their corse came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned — they
dropped their arms, 350
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly
through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

15 Around, around, flew each sweet
sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back
again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the
sky

16 I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that
are; 360
How they seemed to fill the sea
and air
With their sweet jargoning!

17 And now 'twas like all instru-
ments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be-
mute.

It ceased: yet still the sails
made on

18 A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June, 370
That to the sleeping woods all
night
Singeth a quiet tune.

19 Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the
ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

20 Under the keel nine fathom
deep,

From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go. 380

The lone-
some Spirit
from the
south pole
carries on the
ship as far as
the Line, in
obedience to

the angelic
troop, but still
requireth
vengeance.

The sails at noon left off their
tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the
mast,

Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half
her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound: 390
It flung the blood into my
head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

The Polar
Spirit's fel-
low-demons,
the invisible
inhabitants
of the ele-
ment, take
part in his
wrong; and
two of them
relate, one to
the other,
that penance
long and
heavy for the
ancient Ma-
riner hath
been accorded
to the Polar
Spirit, who
returneth
southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul dis-
cerned.
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this
the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full
low 400
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by him-
self
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the
man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath pen-
ance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

'But tell me, tell me! speak
again, 410
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on
so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most si-
lently:
Up to the Moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or
grim.
See, brother, see! how gra-
ciously 420
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE

'But why drives on that ship so
fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high,
more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will
go,
When the Mariner's trance is
abated.'

The Mariner
hath been
cast into a
trance; for
the angelic
power
causeth the
vessel to
drive north-
ward faster
than human
life could
endure.

The super-
natural mo-
tion is re-
tarded; the
Mariner
awakes, and
his penance
begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather: 431
'T was night, calm night, the
Moon was high,
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which
they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from
theirs, 440
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt:
once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little
saw
Of what had else been seen —

The curse is
finally ex-
piated.

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round
walks on,

And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows a frightful
fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind
on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my
cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my
fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the
breeze —
On me alone it blew.

And the an-
cient Mariner
beholdeth his
native coun-
try.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobbs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God ! 470
Or let me sleep away.

The harbour-bay was clear as
glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight
lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

[The rock shone bright, the kirk
no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silent-
ness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with si-
lent light 480
Till rising from the same,

The angels
spirits leave
the dead
bodies,

And appear
in their own
forms of
light.

Full many shapes, that shadows
were,
In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the
deck —
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and
flat,
And by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood. 490

This seraph-band, each waved
his hand :
[It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ;
This seraph-band, each waved
his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice ; but oh ! the silence
sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of
oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce
away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a
joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his
voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood. 510
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash
away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

The Hermit
of the Wood,

[This Hermit good lives in that
wood
Which slopes down to the sea.

How loudly his sweet voice he
rears!

He loves to talk with mariners
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and
eve—

He hath a cushion plump: 320
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard
them talk,

'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many
and fair,

That signal made but now?'

'Strange, by my faith!' the
Hermit said—

'And they answered not our
cheer!

The planks look warped! and
see those sails,

How thin they are and sere! 330
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that
lag

My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with
snow,

And the owl whoops to the
wolf below,

That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish
look—

(The Pilot made reply)

I am a-feared'—'Push on,
push on!' 340

Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the
ship,

And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the
bay;

The ship went down like lead.

*The ancient
Mariner is
saved in the
Pilot's boat.*

Stunned by that loud and dread-
ful sound, 350

Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven
days drowned

My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I
found

Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the
ship,

The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the bill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot
shrieked 360

And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all
the while

His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain
I see,

The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land! 370

The Hermit stepped forth from
the boat,

And scarcely he could stand.]

*The ancient
Mariner ear-
nestly entreas-
teth the Her-
mit to shrieve
him; and the
penance of
life falls on
him.*

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy
man!'

The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid
thee say—

What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine
was wrenched

With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my
tale; 380

And then it left me free.

*And ever and
anon through-
out his future
life an agony
constraineth
him to travel
from land to
land.*

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:

And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

*Approacheth
the ship with
wonder.*

*The ship
suddenly
sinketh.*

I pass, like night, from land to land;

I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:

To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door!

The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride

And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which hideth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been

Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be. 600

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,

'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! —

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,

Old men, and babes, and loving friends

And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell 610

To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small:
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest, 620

Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,

And is of sense forlorn:

A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

LOVE

[Publ. 1798]

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Of in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve! 20

She leant against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve. 30

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story —
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land. 30

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

And to teach,
by his own
example, love
and reverence
to all things
that God
made and
loveth.

She listened with a fitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me that I gazed
Too fondly on her face! 40

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade, —

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright; 50
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than
death
The Lady of the Land.

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain —
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain; 60

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay; —

His dying words — but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and panning harp
Disturbed her soul with pity.

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve; 70
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin-shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name. 80

Her bosom heaved — she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stepped —
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'T was partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 't was a bashful art, 90
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

THE NIGHTINGALE

A CONVERSATION POEM, WRITTEN IN
APRIL 1798

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
(Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge.
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall
find 10

A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy" bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh idle thought!
In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man whose heart
was pierced

With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! fill'd all things with
himself,

And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he, 20
First named these notes a melancholy strain:
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his
limbs

Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
 By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
 Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
 Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
 And of his fame forgetful ! so his fame ³⁰
 Should share in Nature's immortality,
 A venerable thing ! and so his song
 Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
 Be loved like Nature ! But 't will not be so ;
 And youths and maidens most poetical,
 Who lose the deepening twilights of the
 spring
 In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
 Full of meek sympathy must heave their
 sighs
 O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister ! we have
 learnt ⁴⁰

A different lore : we may not thus profane
 Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
 And joyance ! 'T is the merry Nightingale
 That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
 With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
 As he were fearful that an April night
 Would be too short for him to utter forth
 His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
 Of all its music !

And I know a grove
 Of large extent, hard by a castle huge, ⁵⁰
 Which the great lord inhabits not ; and so
 This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
 And the trim walks are broken up, and
 grass,
 Thin grass and king-cups grow within the
 paths.

But never elsewhere in one place I knew
 So many nightingales ; and far and near,
 In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
 They answer and provoke each other's songs,
 With skirmish and capricious passagings,
 And murmurs inusical and swift jug jug, ⁶⁰
 And one low piping sound more sweet than
 all —

Stirring the air with such an harmony,
 That should you close your eyes, you might
 almost

Forget it was not day ! On moonlight
 bushes,

Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed,
 You may perchance behold them on the
 twigs,

Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both
 bright and full,

Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the
 shade
 Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
 Who dwalleth in her hospitable home ⁷⁰
 Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
 (Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
 To something more than Nature in the
 grove)

Glides through the pathways ; she knows all
 their notes,

That gentle Maid ! and oft, a moment's
 space,

What time the moon was lost behind a
 cloud,

Hath heard a pause of silence ; till the moon
 Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
 With one sensation, and those wakeful birds
 Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy, ⁸⁰
 As if some sudden gale had swept at once
 A hundred airy harps ! And she hath
 watched

Many a nightingale perch giddily
 On blossomy twig still swinging from the
 breeze,

And to that motion tune his wanton song
 Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler ! till to-morrow eve,
 And you, my friends ! farewell, a short
 farewell !

We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
 And now for our dear homes. — That strain
 again ! ⁹⁰

Full fain it would delay me ! My dear babe,
 Who, capable of no articulate sound,
 Mimes all things with his imitative lisp,
 How he would place his hand beside his ear,
 His little hand, the small forefinger up,
 And bid us listen ! And I deem it wise
 To make him Nature's play-mate. He
 knows well

The evening-star ; and once, when he awoke
 In most distressful mood (some inward pain
 Had made up that strange thing, an infant's
 dream), ¹⁰⁰

I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
 And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at
 once,

Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
 While his fair eyes, that swam with un
 dropped tears,

Did glitter in the yellow moon-beams
 Well ! —

It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall
grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the
night
He may associate joy. — Once more, fare-
well,
Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends!
farewell. 110

CHRISTABEL

PART THE FIRST

[Written 1797; publ. 1816]

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing
cock;
Tu — whiti! — Tu — whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew!

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the
hour; 10
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray: 20
'T is a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke, 31
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And nought was green upon the oak

But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell. —
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak
tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can, 50
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the
sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone: 60
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou? 70

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet: —
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no
fear!

Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and
sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet: —

My sire is of a noble line,
 And my name is Geraldine: 80
 Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
 Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
 They choked my cries with force and
 fright,
 And tied me on a palfrey white.
 The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
 And they rode furiously behind.
 They spurred amain, their steeds were
 white:

And once we crossed the shade of night.
 As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
 I have no thought what men they be; 90
 Nor do I know how long it is
 (For I have lain entranced I wis)
 Since one, the tallest of the five,
 Took me from the palfrey's back,
 A weary woman, scarce alive.
 Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
 He placed me underneath this oak;
 He swore they would return with haste;
 Whither they went I cannot tell—
 I thought I heard, some minutes past, 100
 Sounds as of a castle bell.
 Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
 And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
 And comforted fair Geraldine:
 O well, bright dame! may you command
 The service of Sir Leoline;
 And gladly our stout chivalry
 Will be send forth and friends withal
 To guide and guard you safe and free 110
 Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
 That strove to be, and were not, fast.
 Her gracious stars the lady blest,
 And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
 All our household are at rest,
 The hall as silent as the cell;
 Sir Leoline is weak in health,
 And may not well awakened be,
 But we will move as if in stealth, 120
 And I beseech your courtesy,
 This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
 Took the key that fitted well;
 A little door she opened straight,
 All in the middle of the gate,
 The gate that was ironed within and with-
 out,

Where an army in battle array had marched
 out.

The lady sank, belike through pain,
 And Christabel with might and main 130
 Lifted her up, a weary weight,
 Over the threshold of the gate:
 Then the lady rose again,
 And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court: right glad they
 were.

And Christabel devoutly cried
 To the lady by her side,
 Praise we the Virgin all divine 139
 Who hath rescued thee from thy dis-
 tress!

Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
 I cannot speak for weariness.
 So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court: right glad they
 were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
 Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
 The mastiff old did not awake,
 Yet she an angry moan did make!
 And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
 Never till now she uttered yell 150
 Beneath the eye of Christabel.
 Perhaps it is the owl's scritch:
 For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
 Pass as lightly as you will!
 The brands were flat, the brands were
 dying,

Amid their own white ashes lying;
 But when the lady passed, there came
 A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
 And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160
 And nothing else saw she thereby,
 Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline
 tall,

Which hung in a murky old niche in the
 wall.

O softly tread, said Christabel,
 My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
 And jealous of the listening air
 They steal their way from stair to stair,
 Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
 And now they pass the Baron's room, 170
 As still as death, with stifled breath!

And now have reached her chamber door ;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet, 180
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet :
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it
bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine, 190
I pray you, drink this cordial wine !
It is a wine of virtuous powers ;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn ?
Christabel answered — Woe is me !
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell 200
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !
I would, said Geraldine, she were !

But soon with altered voice, said she —
" Off, wandering mother ! Peak and pine !
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas ! what ails poor Geraldine ?
Why stares she with unsettled eye ?
Can she the bodiless dead espy ?
And why with hollow voice cries she, 210
" Off, woman, off ! this hour is mine —
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off ! 't is given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue —
Alas ! said she, this ghastly ride —
Dear lady ! it hath wildered you !
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, " 't is over now !"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank : 220
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright :
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake —
" All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel !
And you love them, and for their sake 230
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself ; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, So let it be !
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of woe and woe 240
So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240
That vain it were her lids to close ;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around ;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast : 250
Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250
Dropt to her feet, and full in view.
Behold ! her bosom and half her side —
A sight to dream of, not to tell !
O shield her ! shield sweet Christabel !

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs ;
Ah ! what a stricken look was hers !
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay ;
Then suddenly, as one defied, 260
Collects herself in scorn and pride, 260
And lay down by the Maiden's side ! —
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah wel-a-day !

And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say :
" In the touch of this bosom there worketh
a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !

Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
 But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning,
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
 And didst bring her home with thee in love
 and in charity,
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see
 The lady Christabel, when she
 Was praying at the old oak tree;
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs,
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows;
 Her slender palms together prest,
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale —
 Her face, oh call it fair not pite,
 And both blue eyes more bright than
 clear,
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
 Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
 Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
 Dreaming that alone, which is —
 O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
 The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
 And lo! the worker of these harms,
 That holds the maids in her arms,
 Seems to slumber still and mild,
 As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
 O Geraldine! since arms of thine
 Have been the lovely lady's prison.
 O Geraldine! one hour was thine —
 Thou 'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
 The night-birds all that hour were still.
 But now they are jubilant anew,
 From cliff and tower, tu — whoo! tu —
 whoo!
 Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and
 fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance;
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she
 sheds —
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
 Like a youthful hermitess,
 Beauteous in a wilderness,
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep,
 And, if she move unquietly,
 Perchance, 't is but the blood so free
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
 What if her guardian spirit 't were,
 What if she knew her mother near?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid if men will call:
 For the blue sky bends over all!

PART THE SECOND

[Written 1800]

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
 Knells us back to a world of death.
 These words Sir Leoline first said.
 When he rose and found his lady dead:
 These words Sir Leoline will say
 Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
 That still at dawn the sacristan,
 Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
 Five and forty beads must tell
 Between each stroke — a warning knell,
 Which not a soul can choose but hear
 From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
 And let the drowsy sacristan
 Still count as slowly as he can!
 There is no lack of such, I ween,
 As well fill up the space between.
 In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
 And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
 With ropes of rock and bells of air
 Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
 Who all give back, one after t'other,
 The death-note to their living brother;
 And oft too, by the knell offended,

Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud 360
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestiments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied 370
The same who lay down by her side —
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests 379
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinn'd!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.
So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown, 390
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.
The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies, 400
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might besem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above; 410
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted — ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining — 420
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again. 430

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek 440
My tourney court — that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he
kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his
friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace, 450
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw
again —
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing
sound: 459

Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.
The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,

"What ails then my beloved child?" 470

The Baron said — His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.
Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed 480
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!

Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.

"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along. 490
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

"And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth
Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's
wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are
fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so
sweet, 499
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langlede hall!

Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free —
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array 500
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honour! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine! —
— For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing; 510
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing;
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear you wood from thing unblest,
Warn'd by a vision in my rest! 520
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'd by thy own daughter's name —
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath
the old tree. 540

"And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck. 560
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!

I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away —
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day 560
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!" 57:
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast, 580
And looked askance at Christabel —
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her
head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of
dread,
At Christabel she look'd askance! —
One moment — and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground 590
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees — no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise, 600
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:

And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscion's sympathy
Full before her father's view — 610
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue!
And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said: and more she could not say:
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell. 620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O, by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died, 630
Might prove her dear lord's joy and
pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage, 640
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were
wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old age;
Dishonour'd by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
Brought thus to a disgraceful end —
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere — 650
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,
 Singing, dancing to itself,
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
 That always finds, and never seeks,
 Makes such a vision to the sight 660
 As fills a father's eyes with light;
 And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
 Upon his heart, that he at last
 Must needs express his love's excess
 With words of unmeant bitterness.
 Perhaps 't is pretty to force together
 Thoughts so all unlike each other;
 To mutter and mock a broken charin,
 To dally with wrong that does no harm.
 Perhaps 't is tender too and pretty 670
 At each wild word to feel within
 A sweet recoil of love and pity.
 And what, if in a world of sin
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
 Such giddiness of heart and brain
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
 So talks as it's most used to do.

KUBLA KHAN

[Written 1797; publ. 1816]

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
 A stately pleasure-dome decree:
 Where Alp, the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With walls and towers were girdled round:
 And here were gardens bright with sinuous
 rills,
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing
 tree;
 And here were forests ancient as the hills, 70
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which
 slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn
 cover!
 A savage place! as holy and enchanted
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
 And from this chasm, with ceaseless tur-
 moil seething,
 As if this earth in fact thick pants were
 breathing,

A mighty fountain momentarily was forced,
 Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst 20
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding
 hail,
 Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
 And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and
 ever
 It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
 Then reached the caverns measureless to
 man,
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
 And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
 Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves;
 Where was heard the mingled meas-
 ure
 From the fountain and the caves.
 It was a miracle of rare device,
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw:
 It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played, 40
 Singing of Mount Abora.
 Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 't would win me,
 That with music loud and long,
 I would build that dome in air,
 That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
 And all who heard should see them there,
 And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair! 50
 Weave a circle round him thrice,
 And close your eyes with holy dread,
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.

HYMN BEFORE SUN-RISE, IN
THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-
 star
 In his steep course? So long he seems to
 pause
 On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!
 The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
 Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful
 Form!

Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal
shrine,

Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon
thee,

Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced
in prayer
I worshipp'd the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening
to it,

Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with
my Thought,
Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret
joy:

Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing — there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to
Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart,
awake!

Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of
the Vale!

O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they
sink:

Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual
streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely
glad!

Who called you forth from night and utter
death,

From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged
rocks,

For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and
your joy,

Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence
came),

Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?
Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the moun-
tain's brow

Adown enormous ravines slope amain —
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty
voice,

And stopped at once amid their maddest
plunge!

Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of
Heaven

Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade
the sun

Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with liv-
ing flowers

Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your
feet? —

God! let the torrents, like a shout of na-
tions,

Answer! and let the ice-plains echo,
God!

God! sing ye meadow-streams with glad-
some voice!

Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like
sounds!

And they too have a voice, yon piles of
snow,

And in their perilous fall shall thunder,
God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal
frost!

Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's
nest!

Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain
storm!

Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the
clouds!

Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with
praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-
pointing peaks,

Oft from whose feet the avalanche, un-
heard,

Shoots downward, glittering through the
pure serene

Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy
breast—
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain !
thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with
tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me— Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the
Earth !
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to
Heaven,
Great Hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises
God.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

[Publ. 1798]

THE Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again ! loud as
before.

The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings : save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and
wood,
This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and
wood,

With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not ;
Only that film which fluttered on the grate
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling
Spirit

By its own moods interprets, everywhere
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O ! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing
mind,

Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering *stranger* ! and as
oft

With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-
tower,

Whose bells, the poor man's only music,
rang

From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-
day,

So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted
me

With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to
come !

So gazed I, till the soothing things, I
dreamt,

Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged
my dreams !

And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine
eye

Fixed with mock study on my swimming
book :

Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped
up,

For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed
alike !

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my
side,

Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep
calm,

Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought !

My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at
thee,

And think that thou shalt learn far other
lore,

And in far other scenes ! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,

And saw nought lovely but the sky and
stars.

But thou, my babe ! shalt wander like a
breeze

By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the
crags

Of ancient mountain, and beneath the
clouds,

Which image in their bulk both lakes and
shores

And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear

The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,

Whether the summer clothe the general earth

With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing

Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch

Of mossy apple-tree, while the night thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall

Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

DEJECTION: AN ODE

[Written April 4, 1802]

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arm;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a heady storm.
Rallied of Sir Patrick Spence.

I

WELL! If the Bard was weather-wise,
who made

The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick
Spence,

This night, so tranquil now, will not go
hence

Unroused by winds that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy
flakes,

Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and
rakes

Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
Which better far were mute.

For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'er-
spread,

But rimmed and circled by a silver
thread)

I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling

The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were
swelling,

And the slant night-shower driving loud
and fast!

Those sounds which oft have raised me,
whilst they awed,

And sent my soul abroad,

Might now perhaps their wonted impulse
give,

Might startle this dull pain, and make it
move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and
drear,

A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,

In word, or sigh, or tear—

O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throatsle wooed,

All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,

And its peculiar tint of yellow green:

And still I gaze—and with how blank an
eye!

And those thin clouds above, in flakes and
bars,

That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or be-
tween,

Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always
seen:

Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;

I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;

And what can these avail

To lift the smothering weight from off my
breast?

It were a vain endeavour,

Though I should gaze for ever

On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win

The passion and the life whose fountains
are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:

Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her
shroud!

And would we aught behold, of higher
worth, 50
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own
birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist, 61
This light, this glory, this fair luminous
mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was
given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and
shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the
proud— 70
Joy is the sweet voice. Joy the luminous
cloud—

We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms our ear or
sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path
was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of hap-
piness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining
vine, 80
And fruit and foliage not my own seemed
mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;

And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural
man— 90
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the
whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my
soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my
mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What
a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that
rav'st without,
Bare craag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted
tree, 100
Or pine-grove whither woodman never
clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches'
home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for
thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of
showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping
flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule with worse than wintry
song
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves
among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about? 110
'Tis of the rushing of an host in
rout,
With groans of trampled men, with
smarting wounds—
At once they groan with pain, and shudder
with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest
silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing
crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—
all is over—
It tells another tale, with sounds less
deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight, 119
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,

'Tis of a little child
 Upon a lonesome wild,
 Not far from home, but she hath lost her
 way:
 And now moans low in bitter grief and
 fear,
 And now screams loud, and hopes to make
 her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I
 of sleep:
 Full seldom may my friend such vigils
 keep!
 Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of
 healing,
 And may this storm be but a mountain-
 birth,
 May all the stars hang bright above her
 dwelling,
 Silent as though they watched the sleep-
 ing Earth!
 With light heart may she rise,
 Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
 Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
 To her may all things live, from pole to
 pole,
 Their life the eddying of her living
 soul!
 O simple spirit, guided from above,
 Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
 Thus mayest thou ever, evermore re-
 joice.

YOUTH AND AGE

VERSE, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
 Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee —
 Both were mine! Life went a-maying
 With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
 When I was young!

When I was young? — Ah, woful When!
 Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and
 Then!
 This breathing house not built with hands,
 This body that does me grievous wrong,
 O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
 How lightly then it flashed along:
 Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
 On winding lakes and rivers wide,
 That ask no aid of sail or oar,
 That fear no spite of wind or tide!

Nought cared this body for wind or
 weather
 When Youth and I lived in 't together.
 Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
 Friendship is a sheltering tree;
 O! the joys, that came down shower-
 like,
 Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
 Ere I was old!

Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
 Which tells me, Youth's no longer
 here!
 O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
 'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
 I'll think it but a fond conceit —
 It cannot be that Thou art gone!
 Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd: —
 And thou wert aye a masker bold!
 What strange disguise hast now put on,
 To make believe that thou art gone?
 I see these locks in silvery slips,
 This drooping gait, this altered size:
 But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
 And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
 Life is but thought: so think I will
 That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
 But the tears of mournful eve!
 Where no hope is, life's a warning
 That only serves to make us grieve,
 When we are old:
 That only serves to make us grieve
 With oft and tedious taking-leave,
 Like some poor nigh-related guest,
 That may not rudely be dismiss;
 Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
 And tells the jest without the smile.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY, 1827

ALL Nature seems at work. Slugs leave
 their lair —
 The bees are stirring — birds are on the
 wing —
 And Winter slumbering in the open air,
 Wears on his smiling face a dream of
 Spring!
 And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
 Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor
 sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
 Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
 Bloom, O ye amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may,
 For me ye bloom not ! Glide, rich streams, away !
 With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
 And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?
 Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
 And Hope without an object cannot live.

EPITAPH

STOP, Christian passer-by ! — Stop, child of God,
 And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
 A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he. —
 O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C. ;
 That he who many a year with toil of breath
 Found death in life, may here find life in death !
 Mercy for praise, to be forgiven for fame
 He asked, and hoped, through Christ. Do thou the same !

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

[Publ. January, 1805]

*Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima
cerno, Me quoque qui feci iudice,
digna lini.*

TO THE
RIGHT HONORABLE
CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek and tresses gray
Seemed to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners
gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarths' throne; 20
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,

And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.
He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh. x
With hesitating step at last
The embattled portal arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well: 2
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him God! 2
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain, 20
Though stiff his hand, his voice though
weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained; 2
The aged Minstrel audience gained.
But when he reached the room of state
Where she with all her ladies sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain

Came wildering o'er his aged brain —
 He tried to tune his harp in vain, 70
 The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
 And gave him heart, and gave him time,
 Till every string's according glee
 Was blended into harmony.
 And then, he said, he would full fain
 He could recall an ancient strain
 He never thought to sing again.
 It was not framed for village churls,
 But for high dames and mighty earls;
 He had played it to King Charles the
 Good 80

When he kept court in Holyrood;
 And much he wished, yet feared, to try
 The long-forgotten melody.
 Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
 And an uncertain warbling made,
 And oft he shook his hoary head;
 But when he caught the measure wild,
 The old man raised his face and smiled;
 And lightened up his faded eye
 With all a poet's ecstasy! 90
 In varying cadence, soft or strong,
 He swept the sounding chords along:
 The present scene, the future lot,
 His toils, his wants, were all forgot;
 Cold diffidence and age's frost
 In the full tide of song were lost;
 Each blank, in faithless memory void,
 The poet's glowing thought supplied;
 And, while his harp responsive rung,
 'T was thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung. 100

CANTO SIXTH

I

BREATHES there the man, with soul so
 dead,

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land?
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
 As home his footsteps he hath turned

From wandering on a foreign strand?
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
 For him no minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his name, 9
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim, —
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentred all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia, stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood, 20
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band
 That knits me to thy rugged strand!
 Still, as I view each well-known scene,
 Think what is now and what hath been,
 Seems as to me, of all bereft,
 Sole friends thy woods and streams were
 left;

And thus I love them better still,
 Even in extremity of ill.
 By Yarrow's stream still let me stray, 30
 Though none should guide my feeble
 way;

Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
 Although it chill my withered cheek;
 Still lay my head by Teviot-stone,
 Though there, forgotten and alone,
 The bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorned like me, to Branksome Hall
 The minstrels came at festive call;
 Trooping they came from near and far,
 The jovial priests of mirth and war; 40
 Alike for feast and fight prepared,
 Battle and banquet both they shared.
 Of late, before each martial clan
 They blew their death-note in the van,
 But now for every merry mate
 Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
 They sound the pipe, they strike the
 string,

They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

Me lists not at this tide declare 50
 The splendor of the sponsal rite,
 How mustered in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and
 knight;

Me lists not tell of owches rare,
 Of mantles green, and braided hair,
 And kirtles furled with miniver;
 What plumage waved the altar round,
 How spurs and ringing chainlets sound:
 And hard it were for bard to speak
 The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek, 60
 That lovely hue which comes and flies,
 As awe and shame alternate rise!

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
 Chapel or altar came not nigh,
 Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
 So much she feared each holy place.
 False slanders these:—I trust right well,
 She wrought not by forbidden spell,
 For mighty words and signs have power
 O'er sprites in planetary hour; 70
 Yet scarce I praise their venturous part
 Who tamper with such dangerous art.
 But this for faithful truth I say,—

The Ladye by the altar stood,
 Of sable velvet her array,

And on her head a crimson hood,
 With pearls embroidered and entwined,
 Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
 A merlin sat upon her wrist,
 Held by a leash of silken twist. 80

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon;
 'T was now the merry hour of noon,
 And in the lofty arched hall
 Was spread the gorgeous festival.
 Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
 Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
 Pages, with ready blade, were there,
 The mighty meal to carve and share:
 O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane, 90
 And princely peacock's gilded train,
 And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
 And cygnet from Saint Mary's wave,
 O'er ptarmigan and venison,
 The priest had spoke his benison.
 Then rose the riot and the din,
 Above, beneath, without, within!
 For, from the lofty balcony,
 Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
 Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
 Loudly they spoke and loudly laughed; 100
 Whispered young knights, in tone more
 mild,

To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
 The hooded hawks, high perched on
 beam,
 The clamor joined with whistling scream,
 And flapped their wings and shook their
 bells,

In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
 Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
 From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
 Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
 And all is mirth and revelry. 110

VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still
 No opportunity of ill,
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
 To rouse debate and jealousy;
 Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
 And now in humor highly crossed
 About some steeds his band had lost,
 High words to words succeeding still,
 Smote with his gauntlet stout Hunthill, 120
 A hot and hardy Rutherford,
 Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.
 He took it on the page's saye,
 Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
 Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
 The kindling discord to compose;
 Stern Rutherford right little said,
 But bit his glove and shook his head.
 A fortnight thence, in Inglewood, 125
 Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,
 His bosom gored with many a wound,
 Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found:
 Unknown the manner of his death,
 Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
 But ever from that time, 't was said,
 That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII

The dwarf, who feared his master's eye
 Might his foul treachery espie,
 Now sought the castle buttery,
 Where many a yeoman, bold and free, 130
 Revelled as merrily and well
 As those that sat in lordly selle.
 Watt Tinlinn there did frankly raise
 The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
 And he, as by his breeding bound,
 To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
 To quit them, on the English side,
 Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
 'A deep carouse to yon fair bride!'
 At every pledge, from vat and pail, 135
 Foamed forth in floods the nut-brown ale,
 While shout the riders every one;
 Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
 Since old Buecleuch the name did gain,
 When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
 Remembered him of Tinlinn's yew,
 And swore it should be dearly bought
 That ever he the arrow drew.
 First, he the yeoman did molest 140

With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venom'd wound and festering joint 170
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flagons overturned.
Riot and clamor wild began;
Back to the hall the urehin ran,
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned, and muttered, 'Lost! lost!
lost!'

X

By this, the dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the minstrels tune their lay. 180
And first stepped forth old Albert Græme,
The minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well
Within the Land Debatable;
Well friended too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their
broth
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said. 190

XI

ALBERT GRÆME

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine, 201
For ire that Love was lord of all.
For she had lands both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle
wall;

And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she
fell,
For Love was still the lord of all. 210

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle
wall;—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle
wall,
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.
Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall) 220
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port,
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay
Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre —
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame? 230
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV

They sought together climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stayed, 235
And deemed that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV

Fitztraver, O, what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,

When Surrey of the deathless lay
 Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
 Regardless of the tyrant's frown, ²⁴⁹
 His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
 He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
 Windsor's green glades and courtly bowers,
 And, faithful to his patron's name,
 With Howard still Fitztraver came;
 Lord William's foremost favorite he,
 And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI

FITZTRAVER

'T was All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart
 beat high;
 He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
 Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
 When wise Cornelius promised by his art ²⁶⁰
 To show to him the ladye of his heart,
 Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
 Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
 That he should see her form in life and limb,
 And mark if still she loved and still she thought of him.

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
 To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
 Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
 A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light ²⁶⁹
 On mystic implements of magic might,
 On cross, and character, and talisman,
 And almagest, and altar, nothing bright;
 For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
 As watch-light by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
 Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
 And forms upon its breast the earl 'gan spy,
 Cloudy and indistinct as feverish dream;

Till, slow arranging and defined, they seem
 To form a lordly and a lofty room, ²⁷⁰
 Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
 Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
 And part by moonshine pale, and part war hid in gloom.

XIX

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
 The slender form which lay on couch of lud!
 O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
 Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
 All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
 And pensive read from tablet eburnine
 Some strain that seemed her inmost soul to find: ²⁸⁰
 That favored strain was Surrey's raptured line,
 That fair and lovely form the Lady Geraldine.

XX

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
 And swept the goodly vision all away—
 So royal envy rolled the murky storm
 O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
 Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Her venu repay
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway.
 The gory bridal bed, the plundered shrine, ³⁰⁰
 The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
 These hated Henry's name as death,
 And those still held the ancient faith.
 Then from his seat with lofty air
 Rose Harold, bard of brave Saint Clair,—
 Saint Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas ³¹⁰
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;

Where erst Saint Clairs held princely sway
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay; —
 Still nods their palace to its fall,
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall! —
 Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
 As if grim Odin rode her wave,
 And watched the whilst, with visage pale
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild 320
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
 In these rude isles might Fancy cull;
 For thither came in times afar
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
 The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
 Skilled to prepare the raven's food,
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,
 Their barks the dragons of the wave;
 And there, in many a stormy vale, 330
 The Scald had told his wondrous tale,
 And many a Runic column high
 Had witnessed grim idolatry.
 And thus had Harold in his youth
 Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth, —
 Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
 Of those dread Maids whose hideous yell
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
 Of chiefs who, guided through the gloom
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb, 341
 Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
 Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms!
 With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learned a milder minstrelsy;
 Yet something of the Northern spell 350
 Mixed with the softer numbers well.

XXIII

HAROLD

O, listen, listen, ladies gay!
 No haughty feat of arms I tell;
 Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
 That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.
 'Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
 And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
 Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
 Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

'The blackening wave is edged with white;
 To lurch and rock the sea-mews fly; 361
 The fishers have heard the Water Sprite,
 Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

'Last night the gifted Seer did view
 A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
 Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch:
 Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?'

'T is not because Lord Lindesay's heir
 To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
 But that my ladye-mother there 370
 Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

'T is not because the ring they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
 But that my sire the wine will chide,
 If 't is not filled by Rosabelle.'

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
 A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
 'T was broader than the watch-fire light,
 And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock, 380
 It ruddied all the copsewood glen;
 'T was seen from Dreyden's groves of oak,
 And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud
 Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,
 Each baron, for a sable shroud,
 Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
 Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound, 395
 And glimmered all the dead men's mail

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair —
 So still they blaze when fate is nigh
 The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
 Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
 Each one the holy vault doth hold —
 But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each Saint Clair was buried there, 400
 With candle, with book, and with knell;
 But the sea-caves rung and the wild winds
 sung
 The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
 Scarce marked the guests the darkened
 hall,
 Though, long before the sinking day,
 A wondrous shade involved them all.
 It was not eddying mist or fog,
 Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
 Of no eclipse had sages told; 410
 And yet, as it came on apace,
 Each one could scarce his neighbor's
 face,
 Could scarce his own stretched hand be-
 hold.
 A secret horror checked the feast,
 And chilled the soul of every guest;
 Even the high dame stood half aghast,
 She knew some evil on the blast;
 The elfish page fell to the ground,
 And, shuddering, muttered, 'Found! found!
 found!'

XXV

Then sudden through the darkened air 420
 A flash of lightning came;
 So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
 The castle seemed on flame.
 Glanced every rafter of the hall,
 Glanced every shield upon the wall:
 Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
 Were instant seen and instant gone;
 Full through the guests' bedazzled band
 Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
 And filled the hall with smouldering
 smoke, 430
 As on the elfish page it broke.
 It broke with thunder long and loud,
 Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,—
 From sea to sea the larum rung;
 On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
 To arms the startled warders sprung.
 When ended was the dreadful roar,
 The elfish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
 Some saw a sight, not seen by all; 440
 That dreadful voice was heard by some
 Cry, with loud summons, 'GYLBIN, COME!'
 And on the spot where burst the brand,
 Just where the page had flung him down,
 Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
 And some the waving of a gown.
 The guests in silence prayed and shook,
 And terror dimmed each lofty look.

But none of all the astonished train
 Was so dismayed as Deloraine: 450
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 'T was feared his mind would ne'er re-
 turn;
 For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him of whom the story ran,
 Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
 At length by fits he darkly told,
 With broken hint and shuddering cold,
 That he had seen right certainly
 A shape with amice wrapped around,
 With a wrought Spanish baldric bound, 460
 Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
 And knew—but how it mattered not—
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling heard the wondrous tale:
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to Saint Bride of Douglas make,
 That he a pilgrimage would take 470
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some blest saint his prayers addressed:
 Some to Saint Modan made their vows,
 Some to Saint Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
 Some to Our Lady of the Isle;
 Each did his patron witness make
 That he such pilgrimage would take, 480
 And monks should sing and bells should
 toll,
 All for the weal of Michael's soul.
 While vows were ta'en and prayers were
 prayed,
 'T is said the noble dame, dismayed,
 Renounced for aye dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
 Which after in short space befell;
 Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
 Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's
 heir:
 After such dreadful scene 't were vain 490
 To wake the note of mirth again.
 More meet it were to mark the day
 Of penitence and prayer divine,
 When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
 Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
 And arms enfolded on his breast,
 Did every pilgrim go;
 The standers-by might hear uneath 499
 Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
 Through all the lengthened row:
 No lordly look nor martial stride,
 Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
 Forgotten their renown;
 Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
 To the high altar's hallowed side,
 And there they knelt them down.
 Above the suppliant chieftains wave
 The banners of departed brave;
 Beneath the lettered stones were laid 510
 The ashes of their fathers dead;
 From many a garnished niche around
 Stern saints and tortured martyrs frowned.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
 With sable cowl and scapular,
 And snow-white stoles, in order due,
 The holy fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came;
 Taper and host and book they bare,
 And holy banner, flourished fair 520
 With the Redeemer's name.
 Above the prostrate pilgrim band
 The mitred abbot stretched his hand,
 And blessed them as they kneeled;
 With holy cross he signed them all,
 And prayed they might be sage in hall
 And fortunate in field.
 Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
 And solemn requiem for the dead;
 And bells tolled out their mighty peal 530
 For the departed spirit's weal;
 And ever in the office close
 The hymn of intercession rose;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burden of the song,
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA,
 While the pealing-organ rung.
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain, 540
 Thus the holy fathers sung:

HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away,
 What power shall be the sinner's stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?
 When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll,
 When louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes the
 dead!

O, on that day, that wrathful day, 550
 When man to judgment wakes from
 clay,
 Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSHED is the harp — the Minstrel gone.
 And did he wander forth alone?
 Alone, in indigence and age,
 To linger out his pilgrimage?
 No: close beneath proud Newark's tower
 Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower,
 A simple hut; but there was seen 560
 The little garden hedged with green,
 The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
 There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
 Oft heard the tale of other days;
 For much he loved to ope his door,
 And give the aid he begged before.
 So passed the winter's day; but still,
 When summer smiled on sweet Bow-
 hill,
 And July's eve, with balmy breath,
 Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath, 570
 When throistles sung in Harehead-shaw,
 And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
 And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
 The aged harper's soul awoke!
 Then would he sing achievements high
 And circumstance of chivalry,
 Till the rapt traveller would stay,
 Forgetful of the closing day;
 And noble youths, the strain to hear,
 Forsook the hunting of the deer; 580
 And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
 Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

[Publ. May, 1810]

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES, MARQUIS OF ABERCORN

AC., AC., &C.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR

ARGUMENT

THE scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

HARP of the North! that mouldering long
hast hung

On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fil-
lan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers
flung,

Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every
string, —

O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents
sleep?

Mid rustling leaves and fountains mur-
muring,

Still must thy sweeter sounds their
silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid
to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon, ¹⁰
Was thy voice mute amid the festal
crowd,

When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the
proud.

At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention
bowed;

For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and
Beauty's matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to
stray;

O, wake once more! though scarce my ²⁰
skill command

Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die
away,

And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in
vain.

Then silent be no more! Enchantress,
wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made ³⁰
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foeman storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste ⁴⁰
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;

Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared, 50
With one brave bound the copse he
cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III

Yelled on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out, 60
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din 70
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where, 't is told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce, 80
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er 90
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,

And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood gray
That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
Held westward with unwearied race, 100
And left behind the panting chase.

VI

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith, —
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far, 110
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil, 70
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed, 120
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his
haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take. 130

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew: —
But thundering as he came prepared,

With ready arm and weapon bared, 140
 The wily quarry shunned the shock,
 And turned him from the opposing rock;
 Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
 Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
 In the deep Trossachs' wildest nook
 His solitary refuge took.
 There, while close couched the thicket shed
 Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
 He heard the baffled dogs in vain
 Rave through the hollow pass amain, 150
 Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
 To cheer them on the vanished game;
 But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
 The gallant horse exhausted fell.
 The impatient rider strove in vain
 To rouse him with the spur and rein,
 For the good steed, his labors o'er,
 Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
 Then, touched with pity and remorse, 160
 He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
 'I little thought, when first thy rein
 I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
 That Highland eagle e'er should feed
 On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
 Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
 That costs thy life, my gallant gray!'

X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
 From vain pursuit to call the hounds. 169
 Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
 The sulky leaders of the chase;
 Close to their master's side they pressed,
 With drooping tail and humbled crest;
 But still the dingle's hollow throat
 Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
 The owlets started from their dream,
 The eagles answered with their scream,
 Round and around the sounds were cast,
 Till echo seemed an answering blast;
 And on the Hunter bied his way, 180
 To join some comrades of the day,
 Yet often paused, so strange the road,
 So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI

The western waves of ebbing day
 Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
 Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
 Was bathed in floods of living fire.
 But not a setting beam could glow

Within the dark ravines below,
 Where twined the path in shadow hid, 190
 Round many a rocky pyramid,
 Shooting abruptly from the dell
 Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
 Round many an insulated mass,
 The native bulwarks of the pass,
 Huge as the tower which builders vain
 Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
 The rocky summits, split and rent,
 Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
 Or seemed fantastically set 200
 With cupola or minaret,
 Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
 Or mosque of Eastern architect.
 Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
 Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
 For, from their shivered brows displayed,
 Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
 All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
 The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
 And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes 210
 Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
 Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
 Here eglantine embalmed the air,
 Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
 The primrose pale and violet flower
 Found in each clift a narrow bower;
 Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
 Emblems of punishment and pride, 215
 Grouped their dark hues with every stain
 The weather-beaten crags retain.
 With boughs that quaked at every breath,
 Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
 Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
 Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
 And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
 His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
 Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
 His boughs athwart the narrowed sky. 220
 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
 Where glistening streamers waved and
 danced,
 The wanderer's eye could barely view
 The summer heaven's delicious blue;
 So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
 The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
 A narrow inlet, still and deep,
 Affording scarce such breadth of brim

As served the wild duck's brood to swim. 239
 Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
 But broader when again appearing,
 Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
 Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
 And farther as the Hunter strayed,
 Still broader sweep its channels made.
 The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
 Emerging from entangled wood,
 But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
 Like castle girdled with its moat;
 Yet broader floods extending still 250
 Divide them from their parent hill,
 Till each, retiring, claims to be
 An islet in an inland sea.

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,
 No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
 Unless he climb with footing nice
 A far-projecting precipice.
 The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
 The hazel saplings lent their aid;
 And thus an airy point he won, 260
 Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
 One burnished sheet of living gold,
 Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
 In all her length far winding lay,
 With promontory, creek, and bay,
 And inland that, empurpled bright,
 Floated amid the livelier light,
 And mountains that like giants stand
 To sentinel enchanted land.
 High on the south, huge Benvenue 270
 Down to the lake in masses threw
 Crag, knolls, and mounds, confusedly
 hurled,
 The fragments of an earlier world;
 A wildering forest feathered o'er
 His ruined sides and summit hoar,
 While on the north, through middle air,
 Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV

From the steep promontory gazed
 The stranger, raptured and amazed; 279
 And, 'What a scene were here,' he cried,
 'For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
 On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
 In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
 On yonder meadow far away,
 The turrets of a cloister gray;
 How blithely might the bugle-horn
 Chide on the lake the lingering morn!
 How sweet at eve the lover's lute

Chime when the groves were still and
 mute!

And when the midnight moon should lave
 Her forehead in the silver wave, 295
 How solemn on the ear would come
 The holy matins' distant hum,
 While the deep peal's commanding tone
 Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
 A sainted hermit from his cell,
 To drop a bead with every knell!
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
 Should each bewildered stranger call
 To friendly feast and lighted hall. 300

XVI

'Blithe were it then to wander here!
 But now — beshrew yon nimble deer —
 Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
 The copse must give my evening fare;
 Some mossy bank my couch must be,
 Some rustling oak my canopy.
 Yet pass we that; the war and chase
 Give little choice of resting-place; —
 A summer night in greenwood spent
 Were but to-morrow's merriment: 310
 But hosts may in these wilds abound,
 Such as are better missed than found;
 To meet with Highland plunderers here
 Were worse than loss of steed or deer. —
 I am alone; — my bugle-strain
 May call some straggler of the train;
 Or, fall the worst that may betide,
 Ere now this falchion has been tried.'

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,
 When lo! forth starting at the sound, 320
 From underneath an aged oak
 That slanted from the islet rock,
 A damsel guider of its way,
 A little skiff shot to the bay,
 That round the promontory steep
 Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
 Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
 The weeping willow twig to lave,
 And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
 The beach of pebbles bright as snow. 330
 The boat had touched this silver strand
 Just as the Hunter left his stand,
 And stood concealed amid the brake,
 To view this Lady of the Lake.
 The maiden paused, as if again
 She thought to catch the distant strain.
 With head upraised, and look intent,
 And eye and ear attentive bent,

And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art, 340
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form or lovelier face !
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with
brown, —

The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show 350
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace, —
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue, —
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear, 360
The listener held his breath to hear !

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care, 370
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine in her mirror blue
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh, 380
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame; —
O, need I tell that passion's name ?

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne: — 390
'Father !' she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came; —
'Malcolm, was thine the blast ?' the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
'A stranger I,' the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
Pushed her light shallop from the shore, 400
And when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen; —
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage, 410
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless except his blade, 420
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command. 430

XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
'Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;

On yonder mountain's purple head
 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled, 440
 And our broad nets have swept the mere,
 To furnish forth your evening cheer.' —
 'Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
 Your courtesy has erred,' he said;
 'No right have I to claim, misplaced,
 The welcome of expected guest.
 A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
 My way, my friends, my courser lost,
 I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
 Have ever drawn your mountain air, 450
 Till on this lake's romantic strand
 I found a fay in fairy land !' —

XXIII

'I well believe,' the maid replied,
 As her light skiff approached the side, —
 'I well believe, that ne'er before
 Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
 But yet, as far as yesternight,
 Old Allan-bane foretold your plight, —
 A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
 Was on the visioned future bent. 460
 He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
 Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
 Painted exact your form and mien,
 Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
 That tasselled horn so gayly gilt,
 That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
 That cap with heron plumage trim,
 And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
 He bade that all should ready be
 To grace a guest of fair degree; 470
 But light I held his prophecy,
 And deemed it was my father's horn
 Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.'

XXIV

The stranger smiled: — 'Since to your
 home
 A destined errant-knight I come,
 Announced by prophet sooth and old,
 Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
 I'll lightly front each high emprise
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
 Permit me first the task to guide 480
 Your fairy frigate o'er the tide.'
 The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
 The toil unwonted saw him try;
 For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
 His noble hand had grasped an oar:
 Yet with main strength his strokes he
 drew,
 And o'er the lake the shallop flew;

With heads erect and whimpering cry,
 The bounds behind their passage ply.
 Nor frequent does the bright oar break 490
 The darkening mirror of the lake,
 Until the rocky isle they reach,
 And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;
 'T was all so close with copsewood bound,
 Nor track nor pathway might declare
 That human foot frequented there,
 Until the mountain maiden showed
 A clambering unsuspected road, 499
 That winded through the tangled screen,
 And opened on a narrow green,
 Where weeping birch and willow round
 With their long fibres swept the ground.
 Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
 Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
 But strange of structure and device;
 Of such materials as around
 The workman's hand had readiest found.
 Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks
 bared, 510
 And by the hatchet rudely squared,
 To give the walls their destined height,
 The sturdy oak and ash unite;
 While moss and clay and leaves combined
 To fence each crevice from the wind.
 The lighter pine-trees overhead
 Their slender length for rafters spread,
 And withered heath and rushes dry
 Supplied a russet canopy.
 Due westward, fronting to the green, 520
 A rural portico was seen,
 Aloft on native pillars borne,
 Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
 Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
 The ivy and Idæan vine,
 The clematis, the favored flower
 Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
 And every hardy plant could bear
 Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
 An instant in this porch she stayed, 530
 And gayly to the stranger said:
 'On heaven and on thy lady call,
 And enter the enchanted hall !'

XXVII

'My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
 My gentle guide, in following thee !' —

He crossed the threshold, — and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed, 540
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless
flung

Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bangle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died, 550
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall. 559

XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised: —
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
'I never knew but one,' he said,
'Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.'
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
'You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand 570
As in my grasp a hazel wand:
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.'

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred
knew, 580
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,

Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names, 590
'The Knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-
James;

Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Off for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain, 599
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here.'

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race.
'T were strange in ruder rank to find 600
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdown gave,
Dame Margaret beard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away: —
'Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast, 608
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'T is thus our charmed rhymes we sing.'
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Filled up the symphony between.

XXXI

SONG

'Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not break-
ing;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall, 619
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,

Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

'No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang of war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come 640
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champ-
ing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.'

XXXII

She paused, — then, blushing, led the lay,
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong 650
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED

'Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done;
While our alumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep ! the deer is in his den;
Sleep ! thy hounds are by thee lying:
Sleep ! nor dream in yonder glen 660
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.'

XXXIII

The hall was cleared, — the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed 670
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor's lost.

Then, — from my couch may heavenly
might 680
Chase that worst phantom of the night ! —
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long es-
tranged.

They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view, — 690
O were his senses false or true ?
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now ?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and 700
gone,

Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore. —
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all 710
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless
throng,

Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm; 720
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse, —
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray !
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,

While thus he communed with his breast:—

‘Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden spy, 730
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I’ll dream no more,—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o’er,
I’ll turn to rest, and dream no more.’
His midnight orisons he told, 740
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Beauvenue.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

I

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim
spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o’er the torrent’s foaming
tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-
side,—
Fair as that beam, although the fairest
far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy’s
bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud
the brow of War.

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen, 10
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o’er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way, 20
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path!—they winded now

Along the precipice’s brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling’s turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman’s lance.
‘Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain 30
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty’s tear!

III

At length they came where, stern and
steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on, 40
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain’s scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still, 50
Dark osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass’s jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange
course 59
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV

‘Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,’ the Saxon said,
‘I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar, 70
Nor soon expected back from war.

Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
 Though deep perchance the villain lied.
 'Yet why a second venture try?'
 'A warrior thou, and ask me why! —
 Moves our free course by such fixed cause
 As gives the poor mechanic laws?
 Enough, I sought to drive away
 The lazy hours of peaceful day;
 Slight cause will then suffice to guide 80
 A Knight's free footsteps far and wide, —
 A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
 The merry glance of mountain maid;
 Or, if a path be dangerous known,
 The danger's self is lure alone.'

V

'Thy secret keep, I urge thee not; —
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?'
 'No, by my word; — of bands prepared 90
 To guard King James's sports I heard;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.'
 'Free be they flung! for we were loath
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung! — as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
 But, stranger, peaceful since you came, 100
 Bewildered in the mountain-game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?'
 'Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
 Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Save as an outlawed desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
 Yet this alone might from his part 110
 Sever each true and loyal heart.'

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl,
 A space he paused, then sternly said,
 'And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
 Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
 Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
 What recked the Chieftain if he stood
 On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
 He rights such wrong where it is given, 120
 If it were in the court of heaven.'
 'Still was it outrage; — yet, 't is true,

Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
 While Albany with feeble hand
 Held borrowed truncheon of command,
 The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
 Was stranger to respect and power.
 But then, thy Chieftain's robber life! —
 Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
 Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain 130
 His herds and harvest reared in vain, —
 Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
 The spoils from such foul foray borne.'

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
 And answered with disdainful smile:
 'Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
 I marked thee send delighted eye
 Far to the south and east, where lay,
 Extended in succession gay,
 Deep waving fields and pastures green, 140
 With gentle slopes and groves between: —
 These fertile plains, that softened vale,
 Were once the birthright of the Gael;
 The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land.
 Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
 Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread
 For fattened steer or household bread,
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry, 150
 And well the mountain might reply, —
 "To you, as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore!
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blade must win the rest."
 Pent in this fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey?
 Ay, by my soul! — While on yon plain 160
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
 While of ten thousand herds there strays
 But one along yon river's maze, —
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall with strong hand redeem his share.
 Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
 That plundering Lowland field and fold
 Is aught but retribution true?
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'

VIII

Answered Fitz-James: 'And, if I sought,
 Think'st thou no other could be brought?
 What deem ye of my path waylaid? 170
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?'

'As of a meed to rashness due:
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and true, —
 I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid, —
 Free hadst thou been to come and go;
 But secret path marks secret foe.
 Nor yet for this, even as a spy, 180
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
 Save to fulfil an augury.'
 'Well, let it pass; nor will I now
 Fresh cause of enmity avow,
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
 Enough, I am by promise tied
 To match me with this man of pride:
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
 In peace; but when I come again,
 I come with banner, brand, and bow, 190
 As leader seeks his mortal foe.
 For love-lorn swain in lady's bower
 Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
 As I, until before me stand
 This rebel Chieftain and his band !'

IX

'Have then thy wish !' — He whistled shrill,
 And he was answered from the hill;
 Wild as the scream of the curlew,
 From crag to crag the signal flew.
 Instant, through copse and heath, arose 200
 Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
 On right, on left, above, below,
 Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
 From shingles gray their lances start,
 The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
 The rushes and the willow-wand
 Are bristling into axe and brand,
 And every tuft of broom gives life
 To plaided warrior armed for strife.
 That whistle garrisoned the glen 210
 At once with full five hundred men,
 As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given.
 Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood and still.
 Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch could urge
 Their headlong passage down the verge,
 With step and weapon forward flung, 220
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.
 The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benledi's living side,
 Then fixed his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James: 'How say'st thou now ?

These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
 And, Saxon, — I am Roderick Dhu !'

X

Fitz-James was brave: — though to his heart
 The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
 He manned himself with dauntless air, 230
 Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before: —
 'Come one, come all ! this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I.'
 Sir Roderick marked, — and in his eyes
 Respect was mingled with surprise,
 And the stern joy which warriors feel
 In foeman worthy of their steel.
 Short space he stood — then waved his hand: 240
 Down sunk the disappearing band;
 Each warrior vanished where he stood,
 In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
 Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
 In osiers pale and copes low;
 It seemed as if their mother Earth
 Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
 The wind's last breath had tossed in air
 Pennon and plaid and plumage fair, —
 The next but swept a lone hill-side, 250
 Where heath and fern were waving wide:
 The sun's last glance was glinted back
 From spear and glaive, from targe and
 jack;
 The next, all unreflected, shone
 On bracken green and cold gray stone.

XI

Fitz-James looked round, — yet scarce believed
 The witness that his sight received;
 Such apparition well might seem
 Delusion of a dreadful dream.
 Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed, 260
 And to his look the Chief replied:
 'Fear nought — nay, that I need not say —
 But — doubt not aught from mine array.
 Thou art my guest; — I pledged my word
 As far as Coilantogle's ford:
 Nor would I call a clansman's brand
 For aid against one valiant hand,
 Though on our strife lay every vale
 Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
 So move we on; — I only meant 270
 To show the reed on which you leant,
 Deeming this path you might pursue

Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.
They moved; — I said Fitz-James was
brave

As ever knight that belted glaive,
Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet by fearful proof was rife 280
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind 290
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless
mines 300

On Bochart's the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
'Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vieh-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan, 310
Hath led thee safe, through watch and
ward,

Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand,
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.'

XIII

The Saxon paused: 'I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade; 320

Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?' — 'No, stranger,
none!

And hear, — to fire thy flagging zeal, —
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead: 330
"Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife."
'Then, by my word,' the Saxon said,
'The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff, —
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe, 340
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye:
'Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu? 350
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate; —
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared? — By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valor light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair.'
'I thank thee, Roderick, for the word! 360
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone! —
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast. 370
But fear not — doubt not — which thou
wilt —

We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
 Each looked to sun and stream and plain
 As what they ne'er might see again;
 Then foot and point and eye opposed,
 In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
 That on the field his targe he threw, ³⁸⁰
 Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
 Had death so often dashed aside;
 For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
 Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
 He practised every pass and ward,
 To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
 While less expert, though stronger far,
 The Gael maintained unequal war.
 Three times in closing strife they stood,
 And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood; ³⁹⁰
 No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
 The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
 Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
 And showered his blows like wintry rain;
 And, as firm rock or castle-roof
 Against the winter shower is proof,
 The foe, invulnerable still,
 Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
 Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand ³⁹⁹
 Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
 And backward borne upon the lea,
 Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI

'Now yield thee, or by Him who made
 The world, thy heart's blood dyes my
 blade!'
 'Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
 Let recreant yield, who fears to die.'
 Like adder darting from his coil,
 Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
 Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung; ⁴¹⁰
 Received, but recked not of a wound,
 And locked his arms his foeman round. —
 Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
 No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
 That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
 Through bars of brass and triple steel!
 They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
 The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
 The Chieftain's gripe his throat com-
 pressed,

His knee was planted on his breast; ⁴²⁰
 His clotted locks he backward threw,
 Across his brow his hand he drew,
 From blood and mist to clear his sight,
 Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
 But hate and fury ill supplied
 The stream of life's exhausted tide,
 And all too late the advantage came,
 To turn the odds of deadly game;
 For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
 Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and
 eye. ⁴³⁰

Down came the blow! but in the heath
 The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
 The struggling foe may now unclasp
 The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
 Unwounded from the dreadful close,
 But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
 Redeemed, unhop'd, from desperate strife:
 Next on his foe his look he cast,
 Whose every gasp appeared his last; ⁴⁴⁰
 In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid, —
 'Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly
 paid;
 Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
 The praise that faith and valor give.'
 With that he blew a bugle note,
 Undid the collar from his throat,
 Unbonneted, and by the wave
 Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
 Then faint afar are heard the feet
 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet; ⁴⁵⁰
 The sounds increase, and now are seen
 Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
 Two who bear lance, and two who lead
 By loosened rein a saddled steed;
 Each onward held his headlong course,
 And by Fitz-James reined up his horse, —
 With wonder viewed the bloody spot, —
 'Exclaim not, gallants! question not. —
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight; ⁴⁶⁰
 Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight;
 I will before at better speed,
 To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
 The sun rides high: — I must be boun'd
 To see the archer-game at noon:
 But lightly Bayard clears the lea. —
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

'Stand, Bayard, stand !' — the steed
obeyed, 470

With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air, 480
The rider sat erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merry-men followed as they night.
Along thy banks, swift Teith, they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past, 490
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochter-
tyre;

They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth ! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground, 500
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-
Forth !

And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look down.

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung: —
'Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman
gray, 510

Who townward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array ?
Mark'st thou the firm yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain side ?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or
whom ?

'No, by my word; — a burly groom

He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace' —
'Out, out, De Vaux ! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye ? 520
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'T is James of Douglas, by Saint Serle !
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared.' 530
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and
straight
They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX

The Douglas who had bent his way
From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself: —
'Yes ! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Grame,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel. 540
I, only I, can ward their fate, —
God grant the ransom come not late !
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven; —
Be pardoned one repining tear !
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent ! — but that is by,
And now my business is — to die. —
Ye towers ! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled; 550
And thou, O sad and fatal mound !
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand, —
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare — for Douglas seeks his doom !
But hark ! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel ?
And see ! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers
meet ! 560

Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,

As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park, 570
And play my prize; — King James shall
mark

If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft in happier days
His boyish wonder loved to praise.'

XXI

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked and
rung,

And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the courser's clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went, 580
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.

And ever James was bending low
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and
shame.

And well the simperer might be vain, —
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire, 590
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their ac-
claims, —

'Long live the Commons' King, King
James !'

Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.

But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern; 600
There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous rout. 610
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand

Bold Robin Hood and all his band, —
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill. 620
The Douglas bent a bow of might, —
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy, —
No kind emotion made reply !
Indifferent as to archer wight, 630
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII

Now, clear the ring ! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes, —
Nor called in vain, for Douglas came. —
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King 640
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone 650
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The gray-haired sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang. 660
The King, with look unmoved, beatowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,

Who now with anxious wonder scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong. 669
The old men marked and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.

The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd, 680
Till murmurs rose to elanors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and in the field
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he whom royal eyes disown, 690
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra, — whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North, — 700
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The king's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn, 710
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;

They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high, 720
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI

Then clamored loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain,
But stern the Baron's warning: 'Back! 730
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas. — Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doomed of
old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.' —
'Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!' the Monarch said:
'Of thy misprond ambitious clan, 740
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know;
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow and haughty look? —
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward. —
Break off the sports!' — for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows, —
'Break off the sports!' he said and
frowned, 750
'And bid our horsemen clear the ground.'

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep 760
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law.

And to the leading soldier said:
 'Sir John of Hyndford, 't was my blade,
 That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
 For that good deed permit me then 770
 A word with these misguided men. —

XXVIII

'Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
 Ye break the bands of fealty.
 My life, my honor, and my cause,
 I tender free to Scotland's laws.
 Are these so weak as must require
 The aid of your misguided ire?
 Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
 Is then my selfish rage so strong, 780
 My sense of public weal so low,
 That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
 Those cords of love I should unbind
 Which knit my country and my kind?
 O no! Believe, in yonder tower
 It will not soothe my captive hour,
 To know those spears our foes should dread
 For me in kindred gore are red:
 To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
 For me that mother wails her son,
 For me that widow's mate expires, 790
 For me that orphans weep their sires,
 That patriots mourn insulted laws,
 And curse the Douglas for the cause.
 O let your patience ward such ill,
 And keep your right to love me still!'

XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
 In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
 With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
 For blessings on his generous head
 Who for his country felt alone, 800
 And prized her blood beyond his own.
 Old men upon the verge of life
 Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
 And mothers held their babes on high,
 The self-devoted Chief to spy,
 Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
 To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
 Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
 As if behind some bier beloved,
 With trailing arms and drooping head, 810
 The Douglas up the hill he led,
 And at the Castle's battled verge,
 With sighs resigned his honored charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
 With bitter thought and swelling heart,

And would not now vouchsafe again
 Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
 'O Lenox, who would wish to rule
 This changeling crowd, this common fool?
 Hear'st thou,' he said, 'the loud acclaim
 With which they shout the Douglas name?
 With like acclaim the vulgar throat
 Strained for King James their morning
 note;

With like acclaim they hailed the day
 When first I broke the Douglas sway;
 And like acclaim would Douglas greet
 If he could hurl me from my seat.
 Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain? 820
 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
 And fickle as a changeful dream;
 Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
 Thou many-headed monster-thing,
 O who would wish to be thy king? —

XXXI

'But soft! what messenger of speed
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
 I guess his cognizance afar —
 What from our cousin, John of Mar?'
 'He prays, my liege, your sports keep
 bound 830
 Within the safe and guarded ground;
 For some foul purpose yet unknown, —
 Most sure for evil to the throne, —
 The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Has summoned his rebellious crew;
 'T is said, in James of Bothwell's aid
 These loose handitti stand arrayed.
 The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
 To break their muster marched, and soon
 Your Grace will hear of battle fought; 840
 But earnestly the Earl besought,
 Till for such danger he provide,
 With scanty train you will not ride.'

XXXII

'Thou warn'st me I have done amiss, —
 I should have earlier looked to this;
 I lost it in this bustling day. —
 Retrace with speed thy former way;
 Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
 The best of mine shall be thy meed.
 Say to our faithful Lord of Mar, 850
 We do forbid the intended war;
 Roderick this morn in single fight
 Was made our prisoner by a knight,
 And Douglas hath himself and cause

Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
 The tidings of their leaders lost
 Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
 Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
 For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
 Bear Mar our message, Braco, thy! 870
 He turned his steed, — 'My liege, I hie,
 Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
 I fear the broadswords will be drawn.'
 The turf the flying courser spurned,
 And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day
 Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
 Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
 And soon out short the festal song.
 Nor less upon the saddened town 880
 The evening sunk in sorrow down.
 The burghers spoke of civil jar,
 Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
 Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
 All up in arm; — the Douglas too,
 They mourned him pent within the hold,
 'Where stout Earl William was of old.' —
 And there his word the speaker stayed,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 Or pointed to his dagger blade. 890
 But jaded horsemen from the west
 At evening to the Castle pressed,
 And busy talkers said they bore
 Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
 At noon the deadly fray begun,
 And lasted till the set of sun.
 Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
 Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH. XIV-XXI

THE DEATH OF RODERICK DHU

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
 And fever's fire was in his eye;
 But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks 340
 Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
 'Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
 With measure bold on festal day,
 In yon lone isle, — again where ne'er
 Shall harper play or warrior hear! —
 That stirring air that peals on high,
 O'er Dermid's race our victory. —
 Strike it! — and then, — for well thou
 canst, —

Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
 Fling me the picture of the fight, 350
 When met my clan the Saxon might.
 I'll listen, till my fancy hears
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
 These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
 For the fair field of fighting men,
 And my free spirit burst away,
 As if it soared from battle fray.
 The trembling Bard with awe obeyed, —
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
 But soon remembrance of the sight 360
 He witnessed from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awakened the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along; —
 As shallop launched on river's tide.
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But, when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning's
 beam.

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

'The Minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue, 370
 For ere he parted he would say
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray —
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand! —
 There is no breeze upon the fern,
 No ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyry nods the brake,
 The deer has sought the brake;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still. 380
 So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound,
 That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thickest streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance 390
 The sun's retiring beams? —
 I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far!
 To hero bound for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array!

XVI

'Their light-armed archers far and
near 400

Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frowned,
Their barded horsemen in the rear
The stern battalia crowned.

No symbol clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.

There breathed no wind their crests to
shake, 410

Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.

Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,

Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;

The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow. 420

The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII

'At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell! 430

Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,

The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply —

And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,

Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive in dreadful race,

Pursuers and pursued; 440

Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,

The spearmen's twilight wood? —
"Down, down," cried Mar, "your lances
down!

Bear back both friend and foe!" —
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,

That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low;

And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide. — 45
"We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel crows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame."

XVIII

'Bearing before them in their course
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.

Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light, 46

Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,

They hurled them on the foe.

I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;

I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang!

But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank, — 47

"My banner-men, advance!
I see," he cried, "their column shake.

Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!" —

The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;

Their steeds are stout, their swords are
out,

They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne —

Where, where was Roderick then! 48
One blast upon his bugle-horn

Were worth a thousand men.
And reflux through the pass of fear

The battle's tide was poured;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,

Vanished the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,

Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep

Suck the wild whirlpool in, 49

So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;

None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX

'Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within. —

Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,

Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle. 500
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering sowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the cddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge, 510
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the
ground,

And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North 520
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,
While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day. 530

XX

'Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried: "Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'T is there of yore the robber band
Their booty went to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store, 540
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed,—the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer, 550

The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'T was then, as by the outery riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven:
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael. 560
In vain.—He hears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—
It darkened,—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
Another flash!—the spearman floats 570
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI

"Revenge! revenge!" the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag 580
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
A herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold
Were both, he said, in captive hold.—
But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy 590
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are
clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye 600
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless and moanless drew,

His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu ! —
 Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit passed;
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

SONG FROM ROKEBY

[Canto Third. XVI-XVIII]

SONG

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen.
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
 Beneath the turrets high,
 A maiden on the castle wall
 Was singing merrily, —

CHORUS

'O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green ; 10
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there
 Than reign our English queen.'
 'If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
 To leave both tower and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead we
 That dwell by dale and down ?
 And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May.' 20

CHORUS

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are green ;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there
 Than reign our English queen.

'I read yon, by your bugle horn,
 And by your palfrey good,
 I read you for a ranger sworn
 To keep the king's greenwood.'
 'A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
 And 't is at peep of light;
 His blast is heard at merry morn,
 And mine at dead of night.'

CHORUS

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are gay ;
 I would I were with Edmund there,
 To reign his Queen of May !

'With burnished brand and musketoon
 So gallantly you come,
 I read you for a bold dragoon,
 That lists the tuck of drum.'
 'I list no more the tuck of drum,
 No more the trumpet hear;
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,
 My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS

'And O, though Brignall banks be fair,
 And Greta woods be gay,
 Yet mickle must the maiden dare
 Would reign my Queen of May !

'Maiden ! a nameless life I lead,
 A nameless death I'll die;
 The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
 Were better mate than I !
 And when I'm with my comrades met
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget,
 Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS

'Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen.' 60

HUNTING SONG

[Publ. 1808]

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
 On the mountain dawns the day,
 All the jolly chase is here,
 With hawk and horse and hunting-spear !
 Hounds are in their couples yelling,
 Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
 Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
 'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 The mist has left the mountain gray, 10
 Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
 Diamonds on the brake are gleaming:
 And foresters have busy been
 To track the buck in thicket green;
 Now we come to chant our lay,
 'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 To the green-wood haste away;

We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot and tall of size; 20
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;
You shall see him brought to bay,
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman, who can balk,
Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk? 30
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

AIR — 'A Border Melody'

[The first stanza is old. The others were added 1816.]

'WHY weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen' —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

'Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale; 10
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen' —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

'A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair; 20
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen.' —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmered fair;

The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by lower and ha';
The ladie was not seen! 30
She's o'er the Border and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL

AIR — 'Rimhin aluin' stu mo run'

"It was while struggling with such languor,
on one lovely evening of this autumn (1817),
that he composed the following beautiful
verses. They mark the very spot of their birth,
— namely, the then naked height overhanging
the northern side of the Cauldshields Loch,
from which Melrose Abbey to the eastward,
and the hills of Ettrick and Yarrow to the
west, are now visible over a wide range of rich
woodland, — all the work of the poet's hand,"
Lockhart's *Life*, chap. xxxix.

The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it
bore,
Though evening with her richest dye
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed's silver current glide, 20
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the
tree —
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas! the warped and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye?
The harp of strained and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply? 20
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows
chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.

LORD BYRON

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

A ROMAUNT

[Canto III published 1816. Canto IV published 1818.]

CANTO THE THIRD

Afin que cette application vous forçât de penser à autre chose : il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui-là et le temps. — *Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, Sept. 7, 1776.*

I

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child,

ADA, sole daughter of my house and heart?

When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,

And then we parted, — not as now we part,

But with a hope. —

Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me, and on high

The winds lift up their voices : I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,

When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

II

Once more upon the waters, yet once more !

And the waves bound beneath me as a steed

That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!

Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it lead!

Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,

And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,

Still must I on; for I am as a weed,

Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam to sail

Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,

The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;

Again I seize the theme, then but begun,

And bear it with me, as the rushing wind

Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I flud

The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,

Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,

O'er which all heavily the journeying years

Plod the last sands of life, — where not a flower appears.

IV

Since my young days of passion — joy, or pain,

P perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,

And both may jar; it may be that in vain

I would essay as I have sung to sing. Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling,

So that it wean me from the weary dream Of selfish grief or gladness — so it fling

Forgetfulness around me — it shall seem To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths
of life,

So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition,
strife,

Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves,
yet rife

With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's
haunted cell.

VI

'T is to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.

What am I? Nothing: but not so art
thou,

Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse
earth,

Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy
birth,

And feeling still with thee in my crush'd
feelings' dearth.

VII

Yet must I think less wildly:—I have
thought

Too long and darkly, till my brain be-
came,

In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:

And thus, untaught in youth my heart to
tame,

My springs of life were poison'd. 'T is
too late!

Yet am I changed; though still enough
the same

In strength to bear what time can not
abate,

And feed on bitter fruits without accusing
Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this: but now 't is
past,

And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last,—

He of the breast which fain no more would
feel,

Wrung with the wounds which kill not
but ne'er heal;

Yet Time, who changes all, had alter'd
him

In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the
limb,

And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near
the brim.

IX

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he
found

The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd
again,

And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deem'd its spring perpetual—but
in vain!

Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which gall'd for ever, fettering though
unseen,

And heavy though it clank'd not; worn
with pain,

Which pined although it spoke not, and
grew keen,

Entering with every step he took through
many a scene.

X

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
Again in fancied safety with his kind,

And deem'd his spirit now so firmly
fix'd

And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;

And he, as one, might 'midst the many
stand

Unheeded, searching through the crowd
to find

Fit speculation, such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Na-
ture's hand.

XI

But who can view the ripen'd rose nor
seek

To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's
cheek,

Nor feel the heart can never all grow
old?

Who can contemplate Fame through
clouds unfold

The star which rises o'er her steep, nor
climb?

Harold, once more within the vortex,
roll'd
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's
fond prime.

XII

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man, with whom he
held
Little in common;—untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul
was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still un-
compell'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could
find
A life within itself, to breathe without
mankind.

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him
were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his
home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, ex-
tends,
He had the passion and the power to
roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft
forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on
the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean he could watch the
stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings
bright
As their own beams; and earth, and
earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite.
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will
sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the
link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos
us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wear-
some,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt
wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were
home.
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the
heat
Of his impeded soul would through his
bosom eat.

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less
of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 't were wild,—as on the
plunder'd wreck
When mariners would madly meet their
doom
With draughts intemperate on the sink-
ing deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer which he forbore to
check.

XVII

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's
dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred be-
low!
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust,
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler
so,
As the ground was before, thus let it
be;—
How that red rain hath made the har-
vest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by
thee,
Thou first and last of fields, king-making
Victory?

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of
skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Water-
loo!

How in an hour the power which gave
annals
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too !
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle
flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent
plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations
through;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's
broken chain.

XIX

Fit retribution ! Gaul may champ the
bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth
more free ?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sover-
eignty ?
What ! shall reviving Thralldom again be
The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days ?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down,
shall we
Pay the Wolf homage ? proffering lowly
gaze
And servile knees to thrones ? No; *prove*
before ye praise !

XX

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no
more !
In vain fair cheeks were furrow'd with
hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up be-
fore
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain
years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the
accord
Of roused-up millions: all that most
endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a
sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant
lord.

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and
brave men;

A thousand hearts beat happily; and
when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake
again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;—
But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes
like a rising knell !

XXII

Did ye not hear it ? — No; 't was but the
wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance ! let joy be uncon-
fin'd;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and
Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying
feet —
But hark ! — that heavy sound breaks in
once more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than be-
fore !
Arm ! Arm ! it is — it is — the cannon's
opening roar !

XXIII

Within a window'd niche of that high
hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did
hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's pro-
phetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd
it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too
well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody
bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone
could quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost
fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and
fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of
distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour
ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own love-
liness;

And there were sudden partings, such as
 press
 The life from out young hearts, and
 choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated; who
 could guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual
 eyes,
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn
 could rise !

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste:
 the steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clatter-
 ing car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous
 speed, ²¹⁹
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning
 star;
 While throng'd the citizens with terror
 dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips — 'The foe !
 'They come ! they come !'

XXVI

And wild and high the 'Cameron's
 gathering' rose !
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's
 hills
 Have heard, and heard too have her
 Saxon foes : —
 How in the noon of night that pibroch
 thrills,
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath
 which fills ²³⁰
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the moun-
 taineers
 With the fierce native daring which in-
 stils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each
 clansman's ears !

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her
 green leaves,
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they
 pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave, — alas !
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass

Which now beneath them, but above shall
 grow ²⁴⁰
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder
 cold and low.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
 The midnight brought the signal-sound
 of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms, — the
 day
 Battle's magnificently-stern array !
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which
 when rent
 The earth is cover'd thick with other
 clay, ²⁵⁰
 Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd
 and pent,
 Rider and horse, — friend, foe, — in one
 red burial blent !

XXIX

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps
 than mine;
 Yet one I would select from that proud
 throng,
 Partly because they bland me with his
 line,
 And partly that I did his sire some wrong.
 And partly that bright names will hallow
 song;
 And his was of the bravest, and when
 shower'd
 The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files
 along,
 Even where the thickest of war's tempest
 lower'd, ²⁶⁰
 They reach'd no nobler breast than this
 young, gallant Howard !

XXX

There have been tears and breaking hearts
 for thee,
 And mine were nothing, had I such to
 give;
 But when I stood beneath the fresh green
 tree,
 Which living waves where thou didst
 cease to live,
 And saw around me the wide field revive
 With fruits and fertile promise, and the
 Spring

Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she
could not bring. 270

XXXI

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom
each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to
teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must
awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the
sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honour'd but assumes a stronger, bit-
terer claim.

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length; and,
smiling, mourn: 280
The tree will wither long before it fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail
be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the
hall
In massy hoariness; the ruin'd wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements
are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
The day drags through though storms
keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly
live on:

XXXIII

Even as a broken mirror, which the
glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was, 291
The same, and still the more, the more it
breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not for-
sakes,
Living in shatter'd guise, and still, and
cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow
aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are
untold.

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison, a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches: for
it were 300
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's
shore,
All ashes to the taste. Did man com-
pute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life, — say,
would he name threescore?

XXXV

The Psalmist number'd out the years of
man:
They are enough, and if thy tale be true,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that
fleeting span, 309
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and
say —
'Here, where the sword united nations
drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that
day!'
And this is much, and all which will not
pass away.

XXXVI

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of
men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been
betwixt, 320
Thy throne had still been thine, or never
been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou
seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thun-
derer of the scene!

XXXVII

Conqueror and captive of the earth art
thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild
name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds
than now

That thou art nothing, save the jest of
Fame,
Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and
became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou
wert ³³⁰
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou
didst assert.

XXXVIII

Oh, more or less than man — in high or
low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy foot-
stool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to
yield:
An empire thou couldst crush, command,
rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,
Look through thine own, nor curb the
lust of war, ³⁴¹
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the
loftiest star.

XXXIX

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the turn-
ing tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep
pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood
hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou
hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;
When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favour-
ite child, ³⁵⁰
He stood unbow'd beneath the ills upon him
piled.

XL

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steel'd thee on too far to show
That just habitual scorn, which could
contemn
Men and their thoughts; 't was wise to
feel, not so
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to
use

Till they were turn'd unto thine over-
throw:
'T is but a worthless world to win or
lose,
So hath it proved to thee and all such lot
who choose. ³⁵⁰

XLI

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall
alone,
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave
the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which
paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son was thine, not
then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too
wide a den.

XLII

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell, ³⁷⁰
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a
fire
And motion of the soul which will not
dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless ever-
more,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII

This makes the madmen who have made
men mad
By their contagion, — Conquerors and
Kings, ³⁸⁰
Founders of sects and systems, to whom
add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet
things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret
springs,
And are themselves the fools to those
they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a
school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to
shine or rule.

XLIV

Their breath is agitation, and their life
 A storm whereon they ride, to sink at
 last;
 And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
 That should their days, surviving perils
 past,
 Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
 With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
 Even as a flame unfed which runs to
 waste
 With its own flickering, or a sword laid
 by,
 Which eats into itself and rusts inglori-
 ously.

XLV

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall
 find
 The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds
 and snow;
 He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
 Must look down on the hate of those be-
 low.
 Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
 And far *beneath* the earth and ocean
 spread,
 Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
 Contending tempests on his naked head,
 And thus reward the toils which to those
 summits led.

XLVI

Away with these ! true Wisdom's world
 will be
 Within its own creation, or in thine,
 Maternal Nature ! for who teems like
 thee,
 Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
 There Harold gazes on a work divine,
 A blending of all beauties, — streams and
 dells,
 Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield,
 mountain, vine,
 And chieftess castles breathing stern fare-
 wells
 From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin
 greenly dwells.

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty
 mind,
 Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
 All tenantless, save to the crannying
 wind,

Or holding dark communion with the
 cloud.

There was a day when they were young
 and proud,
 Banners on high, and battles pass'd be-
 low;
 But they who fought are in a bloody
 shroud,
 And those which waved are shredless dust
 ere now,
 And the bleak battlements shall bear no
 future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath these battlements, within those
 walls,
 Power dwelt amidst her passions; in
 proud state
 Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
 Doing his evil will, nor less elate
 Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
 What want these outlaws conquerors
 should have,
 But History's purchased page to call
 them great ?
 A wider space, an ornamented grave ?
 Their hopes were not less warm, their souls
 were full as brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
 What deeds of prowess unrecorded died !
 And Love, which lent a blazon to their
 shields
 With emblems well devised by amorous
 pride,
 Through all the mail of iron hearts would
 glide:
 But still their flame was fierceness, and
 drew on
 Keen contest and destruction near allied;
 And many a tower for some fair mischief
 won,
 Saw the discolour'd Rhine beneath its ruin
 run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding river !
 Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
 Through banks whose beauty would en-
 dure for ever,
 Could man but leave thy bright creation
 so,
 Nor its fair promise from the surface
 mow

With the sharp scythe of conflict, — then
to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem
such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream? — that it
should Lethe be. 450

LI

A thousand battles have assail'd thy
banks,
But these and half their fame have pass'd
away,
And Slaughter heap'd on high his welter-
ing ranks;
Their very graves are gone, and what are
they?
Thy tide wash'd down the blood of yester-
day,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear
stream
Glass'd with its dancing light the sunny
ray;
But o'er the blacken'd memory's blight-
ing dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping
as they seem.

LII

Thus Harold inly said, and pass'd along,
Yet not insensibly to all which here 461
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made even
exile dear.
Though on his brow were graven lines
austere,
And tranquil sternness which had ta'en
the place
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his
face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with
transient trace.

LIII

Nor was all love shut from him, though
his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to
dust. 470
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such a smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though
disgust
Hath wean'd it from all wordlings: thus
he felt,

For there was soft remembrance, and
sweet trust
In one fond breast to which his own would
melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom
dwelt.

LIV

And he had learn'd to love (I know not
why,
For this in such as him seems strange of
mood) 479
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipp'd affections have
to grow,
In him this glow'd when all beside had
ceased to glow.

LV

And there was one soft breast, as hath
been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though
unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above dis-
guise, 490
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent
greetings pour!

I

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine;
And hills all rich with blossom'd trees, 500
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scatter'd cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strew'd a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert thou with me.

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
Above, the frequent fendal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of gray;
And many a rock which steeply lowers, 510
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;

But one thing want these banks of Rhine,—
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

3

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must wither'd be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherish'd them as dear, 520
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them, drooping nigh,
And know'st them gather'd by the Rhine,
And offer'd from my heart to thine!

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round:
The haughtiest breast its wish might 530
bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

LVI

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant
mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's, — but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early 541
tomb
Tears, big tears, gush'd from the rough
soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France whose rights he battled
to resume.

LVII

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young
career, —
His mourners were two hosts, his friends
and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering
here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of
those,
The few in number, who had not o'er- 550
stept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
the whiteness of his soul, and thus men
o'er him wept.

LVIII

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shatter'd
wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her
height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell
and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did
light, —
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watch'd along the
plain:
But Peace destroy'd what War could
never blight, 560
And laid those proud roofs bare to Sum-
mer's rain,
On which the iron shower for years had
pour'd in vain.

LIX

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long de-
lighted
The stranger fain would linger on his
way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might
stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to
prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too
gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the 571
year.

LX

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like
thine;
The mind is colour'd by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherish'd gaze upon thee, lovely
Rhine,
'T is with the thankful glance of parting
praise;
More mighty spots may rise, more glaring
shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft, — the glories 580
of old days,

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,

The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,

The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets
been

In mockery of man's art; and these
withal

A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires
near them fall.

LXII

But these recede. Above me are the
Alps,

The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy
scalps,

And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche — the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,

Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave
vain man below.

LXIII

But ere these matchless heights I dare to
scan,

There is a spot should not be pass'd in
vain, —

Morat! the proud, the patriot field!
where man

May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquer'd on
that plain;

Here Burgundy bequeath'd his tombless
host,

A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument; — the Sty-
gian coast

Unsepulchred they roam'd, and shriek'd
each wandering ghost.

LXIV

While Waterloo with Canne's carnage
vies,

Morat and Marathon twin names shall
stand;

They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and
hand

Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely
cause

Of vice-entail'd Corruption; they no land
Doom'd to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some Dra-
conic clause.

LXV

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old
days;

'T is the last remnant of the wreck of
years,

And looks as with the wild-bewildered
gaze

Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it
stands

Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Avenicum, hath strew'd her sub-
ject lands.

LXVI

And there — oh! sweet and sacred be the
name! —

Julia, the daughter, the devoted, gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath
a claim

Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's
grave.

Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers
would grave

The life she lived in; but the judge was
just,

And then she died on him she could not
save.

Their tomb was simple, and without a
bust,

And held within their urn one mind, one
heart, one dust.

LXVII

But these are deeds which should not
pass away,

And names that must not wither, though
the earth

Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their
death and birth;

The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its
woe,

And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine
snow,

Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal
face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains
view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height
and hue.
There is too much of man here, to look
through
With a fit mind the might which I be-
hold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than
of old, 651
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me
in their fold.

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, man-
kind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the
spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the
coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for
wrong 660
Midst a contentious world, striving where
none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment, we may plunge our
years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to
tears,
And colour things to come with hues of
Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the
sea,
The boldest steer but where their ports
invite,
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd
ne'er shall be. 670

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,

Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth
make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to
inflict or bear?

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become 680
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the
hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul
can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving
plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in
vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past, 690
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was
cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to
spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as
the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted
wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round
our being cling.

LXXIV

And when at length the mind shall be
all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall
be 700
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more
warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each
spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the
immortal lot?

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies,
 a part
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them ?
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart
 With a pure passion ? should I not con-
 temn ⁷¹⁰
 All objects, if compared with these ? and
 stem
 A tide of suffering, rather than forego
 Such feelings for the hard and worldly
 phlegm
 Of those whose eyes are only turn'd be-
 low,
 Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts
 which dare not glow ?

LXXVI

But this is not my theme; and I return
 To that which is immediate, and require
 Those who find contemplation in the urn,
 To look on One whose dust was once all
 fire,
 A native of the land where I respire ⁷²⁰
 The clear air for a while (a passing guest,
 Where he became a being) whose desire
 Was to be glorious; — 't was a foolish
 quest,
 The which to gain and keep he sacrificed all
 rest.

LXXVII

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild
 Rousseau,
 The apostle of affliction, he who threw
 Enchantment over passion, and from woe
 Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first
 drew
 The breath which made him wretched;
 yet he knew
 How to make madness beautiful, and
 cast ⁷³⁰
 O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly
 hue
 Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they
 past
 The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feel-
 ingly and fast.

LXXVIII

His love was passion's essence — as a tree
 On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
 Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
 Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the
 same.

But his was not the love of living dame,
 Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
 But of ideal beauty, which became ⁷⁴⁰
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
 Along his burning page, distemper'd though
 it seems.

LXXIX

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
 Invested her with all that's wild and
 sweet;
 This hallow'd, too, the memorable kiss
 Which every morn his fever'd lip would
 greet,
 From hers who but with friendship his
 would meet;
 But to that gentle touch, through brain
 and breast
 Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring
 heat;
 In that absorbing sigh perchance more
 blest ⁷⁵⁰
 Than vulgar minds may be with all they
 seek possess.

LXXX

His life was one long war with self-sought
 foes,
 Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his
 mind
 Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and
 chose,
 For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind
 'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange
 and blind.
 But he was phrensi'd, — wherefore, who
 may know ?
 Since cause might be which skill could
 never find;
 But he was phrensi'd by disease or woe
 To that worst pitch of all, which wears a
 reasoning show. ⁷⁶⁰

LXXXI

For then he was inspired, and from him
 came,
 As from the Pythian's mystic cave of
 yore,
 Those oracles which set the world in
 flame,
 Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were
 no more:
 Did he not this for France, which lay be-
 fore
 Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years ?

Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers
Roused up to too much wrath, which follows
o'ergrown fears ?

LXXXII

They made themselves a fearful monument !
The wreck of old opinions, things which
grew,
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil
they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall
view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same
hour re-fill'd
As heretofore because ambition was self-
will'd.

LXXXIII

But this will not endure, nor be en-
dured;
Mankind have felt their strength, and
made it felt !
They might have used it better, but, al-
lured
By their new vigour, sternly have they
dealt
On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in oppression's darkness caved had
dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourish'd with the
day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mis-
took their prey ?

LXXXIV

What deep wounds ever closed without
a scar ?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal
to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who
war
With their own hopes and have been van-
quish'd, bear
Silence, but not submission. In his lair
Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the
hour
Which shall atone for years; none need
despair:

It came, it cometh, and will come, — the
power
To punish or forgive — in one we shall be
slower.

LXXXV

Clear, placid Leman ! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a
thing
Which warns me with its stillness to for-
sake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer
spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I
loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmur-
ing
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice re-
proved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have
been so moved.

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet
clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly
seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights
appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from
the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on
the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended
oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night
carol more; —

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill; —
At intervals, some bird from out the
brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the
hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dew
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they in-
fuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her
hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven !
 If in your bright leaves we would read
 the fate
 Of men and empires, — 't is to be for-
 given,
 That in our aspirations to be great,
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
 And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
 A beauty and a mystery, and create ⁸³⁰
 In us such love and reverence from afar
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named
 themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still — though
 not in sleep,
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling
 most;
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too
 deep: —
 All heaven and earth are still. From
 the high host
 Of stars to the lull'd lake and mountain-
 coast,
 All is concentr'd in a life intense,
 Where not a beam nor air nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense ⁸⁴⁰
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
 In solitude where we are *least* alone;
 A truth, which through our being then
 doth melt
 And purifies from self: it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which
 makes known
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
 Binding all things with beauty; — 't would
 disarm
 The spectre Death, had he substantial power
 to harm. ⁸⁵⁰

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places and the peak
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus
 take
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are
 weak
 Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and
 compare

Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or
 Greek,
 With Nature's realms of worship, earth
 and air,
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy
 pray'r !

XCII

The sky is changed ! — and such a
 change ! Oh night, ⁸⁶⁰
 And storm, and darkness, ye are won-
 drous strong,
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the
 light
 Of a dark eye in woman ! Far along,
 From peak to peak the rattling crags
 among,
 Leaps the live thunder ! Not from one
 lone cloud,
 But every mountain now hath found a
 tongue,
 And Jura answers, through her misty
 shroud,
 Back to the joyous Alps who call to her
 aloud !

XCIII

And this is in the night: — Most glorious
 night !
 Thou wert not sent for slumber ! let me
 be ⁸⁷⁰
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
 A portion of the tempest and of thee !
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
 And the big rain comes dancing to the
 earth !
 And now again 't is black, — and now,
 the glee
 Of the loud hills shakes with its moun-
 tain-mirth,
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earth-
 quake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his
 way between
 Heights which appear as lovers who have
 parted
 In hate, whose mining depths so inter-
 vene ⁸⁸⁰
 That they can meet no more, though
 broken-hearted !
 Though in their souls, which thus each
 other thwarted,
 Love was the very root of the fond rage

Which blighted their life's bloom and
then departed —
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters, war within themselves
to wage: —

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath
cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en
his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their
play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand
to hand, 890
Flashing and cast around. Of all the
band,
The brightest through these parted hills
hath fork'd
His lightnings, as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever
therein lurk'd.

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, light-
nings! ye,
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and
a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well
may be
Things that have made me watchful; the
far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll 900
Of what in me is sleepless, — if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempesta, is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human
breast,
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some
high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me, — could I
wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus
throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings,
strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I
seek,
Bear, know, feel and yet breathe — into
one word, 910
And that one word were Lightning, I
would speak;

But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing
it as a sword.

XCVIII

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense and with cheek
all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful
scorn,
And living as if earth contain'd no
tomb, —
And glowing into day. We may resume
The march of our existence; and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may
find room 920
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much that may give us pause if ponder'd
fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens, sweet Clarens, birthplace of
deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of pas-
sionate thought,
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows
above,
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them
wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the
rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love,
who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly
shocks, 930
Which stir and sting the soul with hope
that woos, then mocks.

C

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are
trod, —
Undying Love's, who here ascends a
throne
To which the steps are mountains; where
the god
Is a pervading life and light, — so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling and his breath hath
blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose ten-
der power
Passes the strength of storms in their most
desolate hour. 940

CI

All things are here of him; from the
 black pines
 Which are his shade on high, and the
 loud roar
 Of torrents where he listeneth, to the vines
 Which slope his green path downward to
 the shore,
 Where the bow'd waters meet him, and
 adore,
 Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the
 wood,
 The covert of old trees with trunks all
 hoar,
 But light leaves, young as joy, stands
 where it stood,
 Offering to him and his a populous soli-
 tude, —

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds, ⁹⁵⁰
 And fairy-form'd and many-colour'd
 things,
 Who worship him with notes more sweet
 than words,
 And innocently open their glad wings,
 Fearless and full of life: the gush of
 springs,
 And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
 Of stirring branches, and the bud which
 brings
 The swiftest thought of beauty, here ex-
 tend,
 Mingling, and made by Love, unto one
 mighty end.

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn
 that lore,
 And make his heart a spirit; he who
 knows ⁹⁶⁰
 That tender mystery, will love the more,
 For this is Love's recess, where vain men's
 woes
 And the world's waste have driven him
 far from those,
 For 't is his nature to advance or die;
 He stands not still, but or decays or grows
 Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
 With the immortal lights in its eternity!

CIV

'T was not for fiction chose Rousseau this
 spot,
 Peopling it with affections; but he found

It was the scene which passion must allot
 To the mind's purified beings; 't was the
 ground ⁹⁷¹
 Where early Love his Psyche's zone un-
 bound,
 And hallow'd it with loveliness. 'T is lone,
 And wonderful, and deep, and bath a
 sound,
 And sense, and sight of sweetness; here
 the Rhone
 Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have
 rear'd a throne.

CV

Lausanne and Ferney, ye have been the
 abodes
 Of names which unto you bequeath'd a
 name;
 Mortals, who sought and found, by dan-
 gerous roads,
 A path to perpetuity of fame: ⁹⁸⁰
 They were gigantic minds, and their
 steep aim
 Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
 Thoughts which should call down thunder
 and the flame
 Of Heaven, again assail'd, if Heaven the
 while
 On man and man's research could deign do
 more than smile.

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
 Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
 A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or
 wild, —
 Historian, bard, philosopher, combined.
 He multiplied himself among mankind,
 The Proteus of their talents; but his own
 Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as
 the wind, ⁹⁹¹
 Blew where it listed, laying all things
 prone, —
 Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake
 a throne.

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting
 thought,
 And hiving wisdom with each studious
 year,
 In meditation dwelt, with learning
 wrought,
 And shaped his weapon with an edge
 severe,

Sapping a solemn creed with solemn
sneer;
The lord of irony, — that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath which grew
from fear, ¹⁰⁰¹
And doom'd him to the zealot's ready
Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently
well.

CVIII

Yet, peace be with their ashes for by
them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge, far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things
shall be made
Known unto all, — or hope and dread
allay'd
By slumber, on one pillow, — in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie
decay'd; ¹⁰¹⁰
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'T will be to be forgiven, or suffer what is
just.

CIX

But let me quit man's works again to
read
His Maker's, spread around me, and sus-
pend
This page, which from my reveries I
feed
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps
tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey
whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region,
where ¹⁰²⁰
The earth to her embrace compels the
powers of air.

CX

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won
thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of em-
pires; still
The fount, at which the panting mind
assuages

Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there
her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's
imperial hill. ¹⁰³⁰

CXI

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renew'd with no kind auspices: — to feel
We are not what we have been, and to
deem
We are not what we should be, and to
steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or
aught, —
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or
zeal, —
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul; — no matter — it
is taught.

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into
song, ¹⁰⁴⁰
It may be that they are a harmless wile, —
The colouring of the scenes which fleet
along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to be-
guile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth, — but I am
not
So young as to regard men's frown or
smile
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone, — remember'd or
forgot.

CXIII

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor
bow'd ¹⁰⁵⁰
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles, nor cried
aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such: I
stood
Among them, but not of them; in a
shroud
Of thoughts which were not their
thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself
subdued.

CXIV

I have not loved the world, nor the world
me, —
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there
may be ¹⁰⁶⁰
Words which are things, hopes which will
not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful nor weave
Snares for the failing: I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely
grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they
seem,
That goodness is no name and happiness
no dream.

CXV

My daughter! with thy name this song
begun —
My daughter! with thy name thus much
shall end —
I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the
friend ¹⁰⁷⁰
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst be-
hold,
My voice shall with thy future visions
blend,
And reach into thy heart, — when mine
is cold, —
A token and a tone even from thy father's
mould.

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects, wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's
kiss, — ¹⁰⁸¹
This, it should seem, was not reserved
for me;
Yet this was in my nature: — as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something
like to this.

CXVII

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be
taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though
my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still
franght

With desolation, and a broken claim;
Though the grave closed between us, —
't were the same,
I know that thou wilt love me; though
to drain ¹⁰⁹⁰
My blood from out thy being were an aim
And an attainment, all would be in
vain, —
Still thou wouldst love me, still that more
than life retain.

CXVIII

The child of love, though born in bitter-
ness
And nurtured in convulsion, — of thy sire
These were the elements, and thine no
less,
As yet such are around thee, but thy
fire
Shall be more temper'd and thy hope far
higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er
the sea,
And from the mountains where I now
respire, ¹¹⁰⁰
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou mightst have
been to me!

CANTO THE FOURTH

LXXVIII—CLXXXVI

LXXVIII

Oh Rome, my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to
thee,
Lone mother of dead empires, and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance?
Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your
way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples,
Ye! ¹¹⁰⁰
Whose agonies are evils of a day —
A world is at our feet as fragile as our day.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless
woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago!
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now:

The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers;—dost thou
flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle
her distress!

711

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War,
Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's
pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs
ride
Where the car climb'd the capitol; far
and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a
site:—

Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is
doubly night?

730

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt
and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath his chart, the stars their
map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her
ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is
clear—

When but some false mirage of ruin rises
near.

LXXXII

Alas, the lofty city! and alas, 730
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the
day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge
surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame
away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page!—but these
shall be

Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when
Rome was free!

LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's
wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! thou, who didst sub-
due 740
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst
pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap
the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia;—thou, who with
thy frown
Annihilated senates—Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay
down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly
crown,

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath,—couldst thou
divine
To what would one day dwindle that
which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so
supine 750
By aught than Romans Rome should
thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer—she who
veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and dis-
play'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushing wings—Oh, she who was
Almighty hail'd!

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors; but our own
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the
throne 759
Down to a block—immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free
And famous through all ages! but be-
neath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier,
yield his breath.

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose for-
mer course
Had all but crown'd him, on the self-
same day

Deposed him gently from his throne of
force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding
clay.
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame
and sway, 770
And all we deem delightful and con-
sume
Our souls to compass through each
arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the
tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different
were his doom!

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue, yet existent in
The austere form of naked majesty!
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins'
din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the
queen 780
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he
die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye
been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a
scene?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of
Rome!
She-wolf, whose brazen-imag'd dugs
impart
The milk of conquest yet within the
dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest; mother of the mighty
heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from
thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal
dart, 790
And thy limbs black with lightning—
dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond
charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are
dead—
The men of iron; and the world hath
rear'd

Cities from out their sepulchres. Man
bled
In imitation of the things they fear'd
And fought and conquer'd, and the same
course steer'd,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could the same supremacy have
near'd,
Save one vain man, who is not in the
grave, 800
But vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves
a slave—

XC

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's
mind
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd
At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he
beam'd, 810

XCI

And came—and saw—and conquer'd!
But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down
to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart which never seem'd
to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness—vanity,
Coquettish in ambition—still he aim'd—
At what? can he avouch—or answer what
he claim'd?—

XCII

And would be all or nothing—nor could
wait 820
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread. For this the con-
queror rears
The arch of triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have
flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow!—Renew thy rain-
bow, God!

XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves
 the deep, 831
 And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest
 scale;
 Opinion an omnipotence, — whose veil
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until
 right
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow
 pale
 Lest their own judgments should become
 too bright,
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and
 earth have too much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to
 age,
 Proud of their trampled nature, and so
 die, 840
 Bequeathing their hereditary rage
 To the new race of inborn slaves, who
 wage
 War for their chains, and rather than be
 free,
 Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
 Within the same arena where they see
 Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the
 same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds — they rest
 between
 Man and his Maker — but of things al-
 low'd,
 Avcr'd, and known — and daily, hourly
 seen —
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd
 And the intent of tyranny avow'd, 851
 The edict of Earth's rulers, who are
 grown
 The apes of him who humbled once the
 proud
 And shook them from their slumbers on
 the throne;
 Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm
 had done.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
 And Freedom find no champion and no
 child

Such as Columbia saw arise when she
 Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and unde-
 filed?
 Or must such minds be nourish'd in the
 wild, 860
 Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the
 roar
 Of cataracts, where nursing Nature
 smiled
 On infant Washington? Has Earth no
 more
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no
 'such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to
 vomit crime,
 And fatal have her Saturnalia been
 To Freedom's cause, in every age and
 clime;
 Because the deadly days which we have
 seen,
 And vile Ambition, that built up be-
 tween 869
 Man and his hopes an adamant wall,
 And the base pageant last upon the scene,
 Are grown the pretext for the eternal
 thrall
 Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's
 worst — his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but
 flying,
 Streams like the thunder-storm against
 the wind;
 Thy trumpet voice, though broken now
 and dying,
 The loudest still the tempest leaves be-
 hind:
 Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the
 rind,
 Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and
 little worth,
 But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we
 find 880
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the
 North;
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit
 bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other
 days,
 Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,

Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
 Standing with half its battlements alone,
 And with two thousand years of ivy
 grown,

The garland of eternity, where wave
 The green leaves over all by time o'er-
 thrown;—

What was this tower of strength? within
 its cave 890

What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A
 woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
 Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste
 and fair?

Worthy a king's — or more — a Roman's
 bed?

What race of chiefs and heroes did she
 bear?

What daughter of her beauties was the
 heir?

How lived, how loved, how died she?
 Was she not

So honour'd — and conspicuously there,
 Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
 Placed to commemorate a more than mortal
 lot? 900

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or
 they

Who love the lords of others? — such
 have been

Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
 Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
 Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
 Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,
 Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean

To the soft side of the heart, or wisely
 bar

Love from amongst her griefs? — for such
 the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be,
 bow'd 910

With woes far heavier than the ponderous
 tomb

That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a
 cloud

Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
 In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
 Heaven gives its favourites — early
 death; yet shed

A sunset charm around her, and illumine
 With hectic light, the Hesperus of the
 dead,

Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-
 like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,
 Charms, kindred, children — with the
 silver gray 920

On her long tresses, which might yet re-
 call,

It may be, still a something of the day
 When they were braided, and her proud
 array

And lovely form were envied, praised,
 and eyed

By Rome. — But whither would Conjecture
 stray?

Thus much alone we know — Metella
 died,

The wealthiest Roman's wife. Behold his
 love or pride!

CIV

I know not why, but standing thus by
 thee,

It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
 Thou tomb! and other days come back
 on me 930

With recollected music, though the tone
 Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy
 groan

Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
 Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
 Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
 Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin
 leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er
 the rocks,

Built me a little bark of hope, once more
 To battle with the ocean and the shocks
 Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless
 roar 940

Which rushes on the solitary shore
 Where all lies founder'd that was ever
 dear.

But could I gather from the wave-worn
 store

Enough for my rude boat, where should
 I steer?

There woos no home, nor hope, nor life,
 save what is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on ! their harmony
 Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
 The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
 As I now hear them, in the fading light
 Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,⁹⁵⁰
 Answering each other on the Palatine,
 With their large eyes all glistening gray and bright,
 And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine
 What are our petty griefs ? — let me not number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
 Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
 On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
 In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
 In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,
 Deeming it midnight: — Temples, baths, or halls ?⁹⁶⁰
 Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
 From her research hath been, that these are walls —
 Behold the Imperial Mount ! 't is thus the mighty falls.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales;
 'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
 First Freedom and then Glory — when that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last.
 And History, with all her volumes vast,
 Hath but *one* page, — 't is better written here
 Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd⁹⁷⁰
 All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
 Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask. — Away with words, draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult — despise — laugh, weep, — for here
 There is such matter for all feeling: — Man !
 Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
 Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
 This mountain, whose obliterated plan
 The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
 Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
 Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd !⁹⁸⁰
 Where are its golden roofs ? where those who dared to build ?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
 Thou nameless column with the buried base !
 What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow ?
 Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
 Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
 Titus' or Trajan's ? No — 't is that of Time:
 Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
 Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
 To crush the imperial urn whose ashes slept sublime,⁹⁹⁰

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
 And looking to the stars. They had contain'd
 A spirit which with these would find a home,
 The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
 The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd
 But yielded back his conquests: he was more
 Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
 With household blood and wine, serenely wore
 His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place¹⁰⁰⁰
 Where Rome embraced her heroes ? where the steep

Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,
 The promontory whence the Traitor's
 Leap
 Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors
 heap
 Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon
 field below,
 A thousand years of silenced factions
 sleep —
 The Forum, where the immortal accents
 glow,
 And still the eloquent air breathes — burns
 with Cicero!

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and
 blood:
 Here a proud people's passions were ex-
 haled,
 From the first hour of empire in the
 bud
 To that when further worlds to conquer
 fail'd;
 But long before had Freedom's face been
 veil'd,
 And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
 Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
 Trod on the trembling senate's slavish
 mutes,
 Or raised the venal voice of baser prosti-
 tutes.

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's
 name,
 From her ten thousand tyrants turn to
 thee,
 Redeemer of dark centuries of shame —
 The friend of Petrarch — hope of Italy —
 Rienzi! last of Romans! While the
 tree
 Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a
 leaf,
 Even for thy tomb a garland let it be —
 The forum's champion, and the people's
 chief —
 Her new-born Numa thou — with reign,
 alas, too brief.

CXV

Egeria, sweet creation of some heart
 Which found no mortal resting-place so
 fair
 As thine ideal breast! whate'er thou art
 Or wert, — a young Aurora of the air,

The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
 Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
 Who found a more than common votary
 there
 Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
 Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly
 bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are
 sprinkled
 With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
 Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years
 unwrinkled,
 Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the
 place,
 Whose green, wild margin now no more
 erase
 Art's works; nor must the delicate waters
 sleep,
 Prison'd in marble; bubbling from the
 base
 Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
 The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers,
 and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled. The green hills
 Are clothed with early blossoms, through
 the grass
 The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye
 pass;
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their
 class,
 Implore the pausing step, and with their
 dyes
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy
 mass;
 The sweetness of the violet's deep blue
 eyes,
 Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems
 colour'd by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted
 cover,
 Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
 For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover.
 The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic
 meeting
 With her most starry canopy; and seating
 Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
 This cave was surely shaped out for the
 greeting

Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
 Haunted by holy Love — the earliest
 oracle !

CXX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his re-
 plying,
 Blend a celestial with a human heart;
 And Love, which dies as it was born, in
 sighing,
 Share with immortal transports ? Could
 thine art
 Make them indeed immortal, and im-
 part
 The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
 Expel the venom and not blunt the dart —
 The dull satiety which all destroys —
 And root from out the soul the deadly weed
 which cloy's ? 1071.

CXX

Alas ! our young affections run to waste,
 Or water but the desert; whence arise
 But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of
 haste,
 Rank at the core, though tempting to the
 eyes,
 Flowers whose wild odours breathe but
 agonies,
 And trees whose gums are poison; — such
 the plants
 Which spring beneath her steps as Pas-
 sion flies
 O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly
 pants
 For some celestial fruit forbidden to our
 wants. 1080

CXXI

Oh Love ! no habitant of earth thou
 art —
 An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
 A faith whose martyrs are the broken
 heart,
 But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall
 see
 The naked eye, thy form, as it should
 be;
 The mind hath made thee, as it peopled
 heaven,
 Even with its own desiring phantasy,
 And to a thought such shape and image
 given,
 As haunts the unquench'd soul — parch'd —
 wearied — wrung — and riven. 1089

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
 And fevers into false creation: — where,
 Where are the forms the sculptor's soul
 hath seized ? —
 In him alone. Can Nature show so fair ?
 Where are the charms and virtues which
 we dare
 Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
 The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
 Which o'er-informs the pencil and the
 pen,
 And overpowers the page where it would
 bloom again ?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves — 't is youth's frenzy;
 but the cure
 Is bitterer still. As charm by charm un-
 winds 1100
 Which robbed our idola, and we see too
 sure
 Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out
 the mind's
 Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
 The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
 Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-
 sown winds;
 The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
 Seems ever near the prize, — wealthiest when
 most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp
 away —
 Sick — sick; unfound the boon — unalaked
 the thirst,
 Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
 Some phantom lures, such as we sought
 at first — 1111
 But all too late, — so are we doubly curst.
 Love, fame, ambition, avarice — 't is the
 same,
 Each idle, and all ill, and none the
 worst —
 For all are meteors with a different name,
 And Death the sable smoke where vanishes
 the flame.

CXXV

Few — none — find what they love or
 could have loved,
 Though accident, blind contact, and the
 strong
 Necessity of loving, have removed

Antipathies — but to recur, ere long, ¹¹²⁰
 Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
 And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
 And miscreator, makes and helps along
 Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
 Whose touch turns Hope to dust, — the
 dust we all have trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature, 't is not in
 The harmony of things, — this hard decree,
 This unradicable taint of sin,
 This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
 Whose root is earth, whose leaves and
 branches be ¹¹³⁰
 The skies which rain their plagues on
 men like dew —
 Disease, death, bondage — all the woes
 we see —
 And worse, the woes we see not — which
 throb through
 The immedicable soul, with heart-aches
 ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly; 't is a base
 Abandonment of reason to resign
 Our right of thought, our last and only
 place
 Of refuge — this, at least, shall still be
 mine.
 Though from our birth the faculty divine
 Is chain'd and tortured — cabin'd, cribb'd,
 confined, ¹¹⁴⁰
 And bred in darkness, lest the truth should
 shine
 Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
 The beam pours in, for time and skill will
 couch the blind.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
 Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
 Would build up all her triumphs in one
 dome, —
 Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams
 shine
 As 't were its natural torches, for divine
 Should be the light which streams here,
 to illumine
 This long-explored but still exhaustless
 mine ¹¹⁵⁰
 Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
 Of an Italian night, where the deep skies
 assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words and speak to ye
 of heaven,
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monu-
 ment,
 And shadows forth its glory. There is
 given
 Unto the things of earth, which Time
 hath bent,
 A spirit's feeling; and where he hath
 leant
 His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a
 power
 And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
 For which the palace of the present
 hour ¹¹⁶⁰
 Must yield its pomp and wait till ages are
 its dower.

CXXX

Oh, Time! the beautifier of the dead,
 Adorner of the ruin, comforter
 And only healer when the heart hath
 bled —
 Time! the corrector where our judgments
 err,
 The test of truth, love, — sole philosopher,
 For all besides are sophists, from thy
 thrift
 Which never loses though it doth defer —
 Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
 My hands and eyes and heart, and crave of
 thee a gift: ¹¹⁷⁰

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made
 a shrine
 And temple more divinely desolate,
 Among thy mightier offerings here are
 mine,
 Ruins of years — though few, yet full of
 fate: —
 If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
 Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
 Good, and reserved my pride against the
 hate
 Which shall not whelm me, let me not
 have worn
 This iron in my soul in vain — shall *they*
 not mourn?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human
 wrong ¹¹⁸⁰
 Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!

Here, where the ancient paid thee homage
long —

Thou, who didst call the Furies from the
abyss,

And round Orestes bade them howl and
hiss

For that unnatural retribution — just,
Had it but been from hands less near —
in this

Thy former realm, I call thee from the
dust!

Dost thou not hear my heart? — Awake!
thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurr'd
For my ancestral faults or mine the
wound 1190

I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd
With a just weapon, it had flow'd un-
bound;

But now my blood shall not sink in the
ground;

To thee I do devote it — *thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought
and found,

Which if I have not taken for the sake —
But let that pass — I sleep, but thou shalt
yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 't is not
that now

I shrink from what is suffer'd; let him
speak

Who hath beheld decline upon my
brow, 1200

Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it
weak:

But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words
disperse,

Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of
my curse!

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I
not —

Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it,
Heaven! —

Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be for-
given? 1210

Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart
riven,

Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life
lied away?

And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could
do?

From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry
few, 1219

And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem*
true,

And without utterance, save the shrug
or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless
obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in
vain:

My mind may lose its force, my blood its
fire,

And my frame perish even in conquering
pain;

But there is that within me which shall
tire

Torture and Time, and breathe when I
expire;

Something unearthly which they deem
not of, 1230

Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and
move

In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of
love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set. — Now welcome, thou
dread power!

Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which
here

Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight
hour

With a deep awe, yet all distinct from
fear;

Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls
rear

Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene

Derives from thee a sense so deep and
clear 1240

That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but
unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore,
but because

Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore
not?

What matters where we fall to fill the
maws

Of worms — on battle-plains or listed
spot? 1250

Both are but theatres where the chief actors
rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually
low —

And through his side the last drops, ebb-
ing slow

From the red gash, fall heavy, one by
one,

Like the first of a thunder-shower; and
now

The arena swims around him — he is
gone,

Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd
the wretch who won. 1260

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart and that was far
away;

He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube
lay,

There were his young barbarians all at
play,

There was their Dacian mother — he, their
sire,

Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
All this rush'd with his blood. — Shall he
expire

And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and
glut your ire!

CXLI

But here, where Murder breathed her
bloody steam; 1270

And here, where buzzing nations choked
the ways,

And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain
stream

Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame
or praise

Was death or life, the playthings of a
crowd,

My voice sounds much, and fall the stars'
faint rays

On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls
bow'd —

And galleries, where my steps seem echoes
strangely loud.

CXLI

A ruin — yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been
rear'd; 1280

Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have
appear'd.

Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but
clear'd?

Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:

It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man,
have left away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch and gently pauses there;

When the stars twinkle through the loops
of time, 1290

And the low night-breeze waves along
the air

The garland forest, which the gray walls
wear

Like laurels on the bald first Caesar's
head;

When the light shines serene but doth
not glare,

Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 't is on their
dust ye tread.

CXLV

While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall
stand;

When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;

And when Rome falls — the World.
 From our own land
 Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty
 wall ¹³⁰⁰
 In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
 Ancient; and these three mortal things
 are still
 On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
 Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's
 skill,
 The World, the same wide den — of thieves,
 or what ye will.

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
 Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
 From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest
 by time;
 Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
 Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and
 man plods ¹³¹⁰
 His way through thorns to ashes —
 glorious dome!
 Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and
 tyrants' rods
 Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home
 Of art and piety — Pantheon! — pride of
 Rome!

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts!
 Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle
 spreads
 A holiness appealing to all hearts —
 To art a model; and to him who treads
 Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
 Her light through thy sole aperture; to
 those ¹³²⁰
 Who worship, here are altars for their
 beads;
 And they who feel for genius may repose
 Their eyes on honour'd forms whose busts
 around them close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear
 light
 What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look
 again!
 Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my
 sight —
 Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
 It is not so; I see them full and plain —
 An old man, and a female young and fair,
 Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein

The blood is nectar; — but what doth she
 there, ¹³³¹
 With her unmantled neck, and bosom white
 and bare?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of
 young life.
 Where on the heart and from the heart
 we took
 Our first and sweetest nurture, when the
 wife,
 Blest into mother, in the innocent look
 Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
 No pain and small suspense, a joy per-
 ceives
 Man knows not, when from out its
 cradled nook
 She sees her little bud put forth its
 leaves — ¹³⁴⁰
 What may the fruit be yet? — I know not,
 Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,
 The milk of his own gift: — it is her
 sire
 To whom she renders back the debt of
 blood
 Born with her birth. No; he shall not
 expire
 While in those warm and lovely veins the
 fire
 Of health and holy feeling can provide
 Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream
 rises higher
 Than Egypt's river: — from that gentle
 side
 Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's
 realm holds no such tide. ¹³⁵⁰

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
 Has not thy story's purity; it is
 A constellation of a sweeter ray,
 And sacred Nature triumphs more in
 this
 Reverse of her decree than in the abyss
 Where sparkle distant worlds. Oh, holi-
 est nurse!
 No drop of that clear stream its way shall
 miss
 To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
 With life, as our freed souls rejoin the uni-
 verse.

CLII

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian rear'd
on high, ¹³⁶⁰
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity,
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far
Nile's

Enormous model doom'd the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome. How
smiles

The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from
such a birth!

CLIII

But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous
dome

To which Diana's marvel was a cell, ¹³⁷⁰
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's
tomb!

I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle —
Its columns strew the wilderness, and
dwell

The hyena and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have
survey'd

Its sanctuary the while the usurping
Moslem pray'd;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He ¹³⁸¹
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all
are aisled

In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy
mind,

Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find ¹³⁹⁰
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,

See thy God face to face as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his
brow.

CLVI

Thou movest — but increasing with the
advance,

Like climbing some great Alp, which still
doth rise,

Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to har-
monise —

All musical in its immensities; ¹⁴⁰⁰
Rich marbles, richer painting, shrines
where flame

The lamps of gold, and haughty dome
which vies

In air with Earth's chief structures,
though their frame

Sits on the firm-set ground — and this the
clouds must claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou
must break

To separate contemplation the great
whole;

And as the ocean many bays will make,
That ask the eye — so here condensæ thy
soul

To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by
heart ¹⁴¹⁰

Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not
dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault — but thine. Our outward
sense

Is but of gradual grasp: and as it is
That what we have of feeling most in-
tense

Outstrips our faint expression; even so
this

Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the
great

Defies at first our Nature's littleness, ¹⁴²⁰
Till, growing with its growth, we thus
dilate

Our spirits to the size of that they con-
template.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is
more

In such a survey than the sating gaze

Of wonder pleased, or awe which would
adore
The worship of the place, or the mere
praise
Of art and its great masters, who could
raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought
could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind
of man ¹⁴³⁰
Its golden sands, and learn what great con-
ceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoon's torture dignifying pain —
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending.
Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling
strain
And gripe and deepening of the dragon's
grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenom'd
chain
Rivets the living links, the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on
gasp. ¹⁴⁴⁰

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light, —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow
bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form — a dream of
Love, ¹⁴⁵⁰
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose
breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above
And madden'd in that vision — are ex-
press'd
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly
mood,
When each conception was a heavenly
guest —

A ray of immortality — and stood,
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a
god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from
Heaven ¹⁴⁵⁹
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory — which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor
laid
One ringlet in the dust; nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame
with which 't was wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the
past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more — these breathings are his
last; ¹⁴⁷¹
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing
fast,
And he himself as nothing: — if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be
class'd
With forms which live and suffer — let
that pass —
His shadow fades away into Destruction's
mass,

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life,
and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms;
and the cloud ¹⁴⁸⁰
Between us sinks and all which ever
glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
To hover on the verge of darkness; —
rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract
the gaze,

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the
frame

Shall be resolved to something less than
this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of
fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle
name 1490
We never more shall hear, — but never
more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made
the same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels of the heart — the heart
whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice pro-
ceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread
sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the
rending ground;
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the
chief 1500
Seems royal still, though with her head
discrown'd;
And pale, but lovely, with maternal
grief
She clasps a babe to whom her breast yields
no relief.

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art
thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou
dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay
low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still
bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever; with
thee fled 1510
The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it
seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety. — Can it
be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep
for thee,

And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease
to hoard
Her many griefs for *ONE*; for she had
pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. — Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort — vainly wert thou
wed! 1520
The husband of a year! the father of the
dead!

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment
made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes; in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is
laid,
The love of millions! How we did in-
trust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly
deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and
bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose pro-
mise seem'd
Like stars to shepherds' eyes: — 't was but
a meteor beam'd. 1530

CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps
well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the
tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath
rung
Its knell in princely ears till the o'er-
stung
Nations have arm'd in madness, the
strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and
hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale which crushes
soon or late, —

CLXXII

These might have been her destiny; but
no, 1540
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so
fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a bride and mother — and now
there!

How many ties did that stern moment
 tear !
 From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's
 breast
 Is link'd the electric chain of that despair,
 Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and
 oppress
 The land which loved thee so that none
 could love thee best.

CLXXXIII

Lo, Nem! navell'd in the woody hills
 So far, that the uprooting wind which
 tears ¹⁵⁵⁰
 The oak from his foundation, and which
 spills
 The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
 Its foam against the skies, reluctant
 spares
 The oval mirror of thy glassy lake; —
 And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface
 wears
 A deep cold settled aspect nought can
 shake,
 All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps
 the snake.

CLXXXIV

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
 Shine from a sister valley; and afar
 The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean
 laves ¹⁵⁶⁰
 The Latian coast where sprung the Epic
 war,
 'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascend-
 ing star
 Rose o'er an empire: but beneath thy
 right
 Tully reposed from Rome; and where
 you bar
 Of girdling mountains intercepts the
 sight
 The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary
 bard's delight.

CLXXXV

But I forget. — My Pilgrim's shrine is
 won,
 And he and I must part — so let it be:
 His task and mine alike are nearly done;
 Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
 The midland ocean breaks on him and
 me, ¹⁵⁷¹
 And from the Alban Mount we now be-
 hold

Our friend of youth, that ocean, which
 when we
 Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
 Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark
 Euxine roll'd

CLXXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades. Long
 years —
 Long, though not very many — since
 have done
 Their work on both; some suffering and
 some tears
 Have left us nearly where we had begun:
 Yet not in vain our mortal race hath
 run; ¹⁵⁸⁰
 We have had our reward, and it is here, —
 That we can yet feel gladden'd by the
 sun,
 And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as
 dear
 As if there were no man to trouble what is
 clear.

CLXXXVII

Oh that the Desert were my dwelling-
 place,
 With one fair Spirit for my minister,
 That I might all forget the human race,
 And, hating no one, love but only her !
 Ye Elements, in whose ennobling stir
 I feel myself exalted, can ye not ¹⁵⁹⁰
 Accord me such a being ? Do I err
 In deeming such inhabit many a spot,
 Though with them to converse can rarely
 be our lot ?

CLXXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
 There is society where none intrudes,
 By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
 From these our interviews, in which I
 steal ¹⁵⁹⁹
 From all I may be or have been before,
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel
 What I can ne'er express, yet can not all
 conceal.

CLXXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean,
 roll !
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in
 vain;

Man marks the earth with ruin, his con-
 trol
 Stops with the shore; upon the watery
 plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth
 remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling
 groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and
 unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy
 fields
 Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise
 And shake him from thee; the vile
 strength he wields
 For earth's destruction thou dost all de-
 spise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful
 spray
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply
 lies
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,
 And dashest him again to earth: — there let
 him lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the
 walls
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs
 make
 Their clay creator the vain title take
 Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, —
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy
 flake,
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which
 mar
 Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Tra-
 falgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all
 save thee —
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what
 are they?
 Thy waters wash'd them power while they
 were free,
 And many a tyrant since; their shores
 obey

The stranger, slave, or savage; their
 decay
 Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so
 thou,
 Unchangeable save to thy wild waves'
 play;
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure
 brow;
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest
 now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Al-
 mighty's form
 Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
 Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale,
 or storm,
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
 Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and
 sublime —
 The image of Eternity — the throne
 Of the Invisible; even from out thy
 alime
 The monsters of the deep are made; each
 zone
 Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fath-
 omless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my
 joy
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to
 be
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From
 a boy
 I wanton'd with thy breakers — they to
 me
 Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
 Made them a terror — 't was a pleasing
 fear,
 For I was as it were a child of thee,
 And trusted to thy billows far and near,
 And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I
 do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done — my song hath ceased —
 my theme
 Has died into an echo; it is fit
 The spell should break of this protracted
 dream.
 The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath
 lit
 My midnight lamp — and what is writ,
 is writ, —

Would it were worthier ! but I am not
now
That which I have been — and my visions
flit
Less palpably before me — and the
glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering,
faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell ! a word that must be, and hath
been —
A sound which makes us linger; — yet
— farewell !
Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the
scene
Which is his last, if in your memories
dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye
swell 1670
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-
shell;
Farewell ! with him alone may rest the
pain,
If such there were — with you, the moral
of his strain !

'WHEN WE TWO PARTED'

[Written 1806. Publ. 1816]

WHEN we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow —
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;

A shudder comes o'er me —
Why wert thou so dear ? 20

They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well: —
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met —
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee,
After long years,
How should I greet thee ? — 30
With silence and tears.

'MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART'

[Written 1810. Publ. 1812]

Ζών μου, σὺς ἀγαθὸ.

[Supposed to be Theresa Maori, who afterwards married Mr. Black, an Englishman.]

MAID of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh, give me back my heart !
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest !
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζών μου, σὺς ἀγαθὸ.

By those tresses unconfined,
Woo'd by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge; 20
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζών μου, σὺς ἀγαθὸ.

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe,
Ζών μου, σὺς ἀγαθὸ.

Maid of Athens ! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet ! when alone. 20
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee ? No !
Ζών μου, σὺς ἀγαθὸ.

'AND THOU ART DEAD, AS
YOUNG AND FAIR'

[Publ. 1812]

*Hec, quanto minus est cum reliquis versari
quam tui meminisse!*

AND thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low, 10
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou, 20
Who didst not change through all the past
And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine. 31
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away,
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away: 40
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;

Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd, 50
And thou wert lovely to the last,
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace, 60
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me, 70
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught, except its living years.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

[Publ. 1816]

*O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentum ortus ex animo; quater
Felix! in imo qui scotentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.
GRAY'S Poemata.*

THERE'S not a joy the world can give like
that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines
in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush
alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere
youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the
wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean
of excess:

The magnet of their course is gone, or only
points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall
never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like
death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not
dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the foun-
tain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is
where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and
mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more
their former hope of rest;
'T is but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd
turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but
worn and grey beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt, — or be what
I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er
many a vanish'd scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all
brackish though they be,
So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those
tears would flow to me.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

[Publ. 1816]

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming.
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

FARE THEE WELL

[Publ. 1816]

'Alas! they had been friends in Youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth:
And constancy lives in realms above;
And Life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain;

But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining —
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs, which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.'
COLERIDGE'S *Christabel*.

FARE thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare thee well!
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again:

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'T was not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee —
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own its life retaineth —
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is — that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father !'
Though his care she must forego ?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless
thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd ! 40

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou nevermore may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with *thee* they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow, 50
Bows to thee — by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:

But 't is done — all words are idle —
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well ! — thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die. 60

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

[Publ. 1816]

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was ac-
quainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine, 10
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;

And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
To pain — it shall not be its slave. 20
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not con-
temn —

They may torture, but shall not subdue
me —

'T is of *thee* that I think — not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forberest to grieve me,
Though slander'd, thou never couldst
shake, —

Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly, 30
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me.
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one —
If my soul was not fitt'd to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun:

And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*. 40

From the wreck of the past, which hath
perish'd,

Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cher-
ish'd

Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wild waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

[Publ. 1830]

My sister ! my sweet sister ! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine.
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:

Go where I will, to me thou art the same —

A loved regret which I would not resign.
There yet are two things in my destiny, —
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

The first were nothing — had I still the last,

It were the haven of my happiness; 10
But other claims and other ties thou hast,

And mine is not the wish to make them less.

A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past

Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore, —

He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks, 20

The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen

My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.

My whole life was a contest, since the day

That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd

The gift, — a fate, or will, that walk'd astray;

And I at times have found the struggle hard,

And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay: 30

But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd

Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something — I know not what — does still uphold

A spirit of slight patience; — not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir 41
Within me, — or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear),

Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not

The chief companion of a calmer lot.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers,
and brooks, 50
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,

Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love — but none like thee.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create

A fund for contemplation; — to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire: 60

Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most desire,

And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

Oh that thou wert but with me! — but I grow

The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude, which I have vaunted so,
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show; —

I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy, 71
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more.

Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:

Sad have Time must with my memory
make
Ere *that* or *thou* can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have
loved, they are
Resign'd for ever, or divided far. 80

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will com-
ply —
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister — till I look again on thee.

I can reduce all feelings but this one,
And that I would not; — for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life be-
gun, 91
The earliest — even the only paths for me:
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would
have slept;
I had not suffer'd, and *thou* hadst not wept.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with
Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with
me grew,
And made me all which they can make
— a name. 100
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over — I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before.

And for the future, this world's future
may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outlived myself by many a day;
Having survived so many things that
were;
My years have been no slumber, but the
prey 109
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

And for the remnant which may be to
come,
I am content; and for the past I feel

Not thankless, — for within the crowded
sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would
steal;
And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings farther. — Nor shall I conceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought pro-
found. 118

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy
heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are — I am, even as thou art —
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,
From life's commencement to its slow
decline
We are entwined — let death come slow
or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

'SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY'

[Publ. 1814]

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

'OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM'

OH! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

And oft by you blue gushing stream
 Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
 And feed deep thought with many a dream,
 And lingering pause and lightly tread;
 Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd
 the dead! 10

Away! we know that tears are vain,
 That death nor heeds nor hears dis-
 tress:

Will this unteach us to complain?
 Or make one mourner weep the less?
 And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
 Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

'WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY'

WHEN coldness wraps this suffering clay,
 Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
 It cannot die, it cannot stay,
 But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
 Then, unembodied, doth it trace
 By steps each planet's heavenly way?
 Or fill at once the realms of space,
 A thing of eyes, that all survey?

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd,
 A thought unseen, but seeing all, 20
 All, all in earth, or skies display'd,
 Shall it survey, shall it recall:
 Each fainter trace that memory holds
 So darkly of departed years,
 In one broad glance the soul beholds,
 And all, that was, at once appears.

Before Creation peopled earth,
 Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
 And where the furthest heaven had birth,
 The spirit trace its rising track. 25
 And where the future mars or makes,
 Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
 While sun is quench'd or system breaks,
 Fix'd in its own eternity.

Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear,
 It lives all passionless and pure:
 An age shall fleet like earthly year,
 Its years as moments shall endure.
 Away, away, without a wing,
 O'er all, through all, its thought shall
 fly; 30
 A nameless and eternal thing,
 Forgetting what it was to die.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

THE King was on his throne,
 The Satraps throug'd the hall;
 A thousand bright lamps shone
 O'er that high festival.
 A thousand cups of gold,
 In Judah deem'd divine—
 Jehovah's vessels hold
 The godless Heathen's wine!

In that same hour and hall,
 The fingers of a hand 35
 Came forth against the wall,
 And wrote as if on sand;
 The fingers of a man;—
 A solitary hand
 Along the letters ran,
 And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
 And bade no more rejoice;
 All bloodless wax'd his look,
 And tremulous his voice. 40
 'Let the men of lore appear,
 The wisest of the earth,
 And expound the words of fear,
 Which mar our royal mirth.'

Chaldea's seers are good,
 But here they have no skill;
 And the unknown letters stood
 Untold and awful still.
 And Babel's men of age 35
 Are wise and deep in lore;
 But now they were not sage,
 They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
 A stranger and a youth,
 He heard the king's command,
 He saw that writing's truth.
 The lamps around were bright,
 The prophecy in view;
 He read it on that night,—
 The morrow proved it true. 45

'Belshazzar's grave is made,
 His kingdom pass'd away,
 He, in the balance weigh'd,
 Is light and worthless clay;
 The shroud, his robe of state,
 His canopy the stone:
 The Mede is at his gate!
 The Persian on his throne!'

THE DESTRUCTION OF
SENNACHERIB

[Publ. 1815]

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on
the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars
on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer
is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were
seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and
strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings
on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he
pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly
and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for
ever grew still!
And there lay the steed with his nostrils all
wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath
of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on
the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating
surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on
his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners
alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their
wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of
Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmeared by
the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the
Lord!

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

[Publ. 1813]

A TURKISH TALE

'Had we never loved me kindly,
Had we never loved me blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.'

Byron

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD HOLLAND,

THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF
REGARD AND RESPECT,
BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED
AND SINCERE FRIEND,
BYRON.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

Know ye the land where the cypress and
myrtle

Are emblems of deeds that are done in
their clime,

Where the rage of the vulture, the love of
the turtle,

Now melt into sorrow, now madden to
crime?

Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams
ever shine;

Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd
with perfume,

Wax faint o'er the gardens of Göl in her
bloom;

Where the citron and olive are fairest of
fruit,

And the voice of the nightingale never is
mute:

Where the tints of the earth, and the hues
of the sky,

In colour though varied, in beauty may
vie,

And the purple of Ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they
twine,

And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'T is the clime of the East; 't is the land of
the Sun —

Can he smile on such deeds as his children
have done?

Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the
tales which they tell.

II

Begirt with many a gallant slave 20
Apparell'd as becomes the brave,
Awaiting each his lord's behest
To guide his steps, or guard his rest,
Old Giaffir sate in his Divan.

Deep thought was in his aged eye;
And though the face of Mussulman
Not oft betrays to standers by
The mind within, well skill'd to hide
All but unconquerable pride,
His pensive cheek and pondering brow 30
Did more than he was wont avow.

III

'Let the chamber be clear'd.' — The train
disappear'd —

'Now call me the chief of the Haram
guard.'

With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire's award.
'Haroun — when all the crowd that wait
Are pass'd beyond the outer gate
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika's face unveil'd !),
Hence, lead my daughter from her
tower; 40

Her fate is fix'd this very hour:
Yet not to her repeat my thought;
By me alone be duty taught !'

'Pacha ! to hear is to obey.'
No more must slave to despot say —
Then to the tower had ta'en his way:
But here young Selim silence brake,
First lowly rendering reverence meet;
And downcast look'd, and gently spake,
Still standing at the Pacha's feet: 50
For son of Moslem must expire,
Ere dare to sit before his sire !

'Father ! for fear that thou shouldst
chide

My sister, or her sable guide,
Know — for the fault, if fault there be,
Was mine, then fall thy frowns on me —
So lovelily the morning shone,

That — let the old and weary sleep —
I could not; and to view alone

The fairest scenes of land and deep, 60
With none to listen and reply
To thoughts with which my heart beat
high,

Were irksome — for whate'er my mood,
In sooth I love not solitude.

I on Zuleika's slumber broke,

And, as thou knowest that for me
Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
Before the guardian slaves awoke
We to the cypress groves had flown,
And made earth, main, and heaven our
own ! 70

There linger'd we, beguiled too long,
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song;
Till I, who heard the deep tambour
Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,
To thee, and to my duty true,
Warn'd by the sound, to greet thee
flew.

But there Zuleika wanders yet —
Nay, Father, rage not — nor forget
That none can pierce that secret bower
But those who watch the women's tower.'

IV

'Son of a slave,' the Pacha said, 80
'From unbelieving mother bred,
Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that beseems a man in thee.
Thou, when thine arm should bend the
bow,

And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,
Must pore where babbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow.
Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
Thy listless eyes so much admire, 90
Would lend thee something of his fire !
Thou, who wouldst see this battlement
By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;
Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall,
Nor strike one stroke for life and death
Against the curs of Nazareth !
Go — let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff — not the brand. 100
But, Haroun ! — to my daughter speed:
And hark — of thine own head take
heed —

If thus Zuleika oft takes wing —
Thou see'st yon bow — it hath a string !'

V

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,

At least that met old Giaffir's ear,
But every frown and every word
Pierced keener than a Christian sword.

'Son of a slave ! — reproach'd with
fear !

Those gibes had cost another dear. 110

Son of a slave ! — and *who* my sire ?'

Thus held his thoughts their dark career;

And glances ev'n of more than ire
Flash forth, then faintly disappear.

Old Giaffir gazed upon his son

And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;

He saw rebellion there begun.

'Come hither, boy — what, no reply ?
I mark thee — and I know thee too; ¹³⁰
But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
But if thy beard had manlier length,
And if thy hand had skill and strength,
I'd joy to see thee break a lance,
Albeit against my own perchance.'

As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:
That eye return'd him glance for glance,

And proudly to his sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quail'd and shrunk
askance — ¹³⁰

And why — he felt, but durst not tell.

'Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy.
I never loved him from his birth,
And — but his arm is little worth,
And scarcely in the chase could cope
With timid fawn or antelope,
Far less would venture into strife
Where man contends for fame and life —
I would not trust that look or tone: ¹⁴⁰
No, nor the blood so near my own.
That blood — he hath not heard — no
more —

I'll watch him closer than before.
He is an Arab to my sight,
Or Christian crouching in the fight —
But hark ! — I hear Zuleika's voice;

Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear:
She is the offspring of my choice;
Oh ! more than ev'n her mother
dear,

With all to hope, and nought to fear —
My Peri ! ever welcome here ! ¹⁵¹
Sweet as the desert fountain's wave
To lips just cool'd in time to save,

Such to my longing sight art thou;
Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
More thanks for life, than I for thine,
Who blest thy birth and bless thee
now.'

VI

Fair as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent
smiling,

Whose image then was stamp'd upon her
mind — ¹⁶⁰

But once beguiled and ever more beguiling;

Dazzling as that, oh ! too transcendent
vision

To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber
given,

When heart meets heart again in dreams
Elysian,

And paints the lost on Earth revived in
Heaven;

Soft as the memory of buried love;

Pure as the prayer which Childhood wafts
above;

Was she, the daughter of that rude old
Chief

Who met the maid with tears — but not of
grief.

Who hath not proved how feebly words
essay ¹⁷⁰

To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly
ray ?

Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart con-
fess

The might, the majesty of Loveliness ?

Such was Zuleika, such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her
alone, —

The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the Music breathing from her
face,

The heart whose softness harmonized the
whole: ¹⁸⁰

And, oh ! that eye was in itself a Soul !

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;
At one kind word those arms extending

To clasp the neck of him who blest

His child caressing and carest,

Zuleika came; and Giaffir felt

His purpose half within him melt.

Not that against her fancied weal

His heart though stern could ever
feel; ¹⁹⁰

Affection chain'd her to that heart;

Ambition tore the links apart.

VII

'Zuleika ! child of gentleness !
 How dear this very day must tell,
 When I forget my own distress,
 In losing what I love so well,
 To bid thee with another dwell —
 Another ! and a braver man
 Was never seen in battle's van.
 We Moslem reek not much of blood; 200
 But yet the line of Carasman
 Unchanged, unchangeable hath stood
 First of the bold Timariot bands
 That won and well can keep their lands.
 Enough that he who comes to woo
 Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou:
 His years need scarce a thought em-
 ploy;
 I would not have thee wed a boy.
 And thou shalt have a noble dower:
 And his and my united power 210
 Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
 Which others tremble but to scan,
 And teach the messenger what fate
 The bearer of such boon may wait.
 And now thou know'st thy father's will;
 All that thy sex hath need to know:
 'Twas mine to teach obedience still —
 The way to love, thy lord may show.'

VIII

In silence bow'd the virgin's head;
 And if her eye was fill'd with tears 220
 That stifled feeling dare not shed,
 And changed her cheek from pale to
 red,
 And red to pale, as through her ears
 Those winged words like arrows sped,
 What could such be but maiden fears ?
 So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
 Love half regrets to kiss it dry;
 So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
 Even Pity scarce can wish it less !
 Whate'er it was the sire forgot; 230
 Or if remember'd, mark'd it not;
 Thrice clapp'd his hands, and call'd his
 steed,
 Resign'd his gem-adorn'd chibouque,
 And mounting featly for the mead,
 With Mangrabee and Mamaluke,
 His way amid his Delis took,
 To witness many an active deed
 With sabre keen or blunt jerreed.
 The Kislar only and his Moors
 Watch well the Haram's massy doors. 240

IX

His head was leant upon his hand,
 His eye look'd o'er the dark blue water
 That swiftly glides and gently swells
 Between the winding Dardanelles;
 But yet he saw nor sea nor strand,
 Nor even his Pacha's turban'd band
 Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
 Careering cleave the folded felt
 With sabre stroke right sharply dealt;
 Nor mark'd the javelin-darting crowd, 250
 Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud —
 He thought but of old Giaffir's daugh-
 ter !

X

No word from Selim's bosom broke;
 One sigh Zuleika's thought bespoke:
 Still gazed he through the lattice grate,
 Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate.
 To him Zuleika's eye was turn'd,
 But little from his aspect learn'd;
 Equal her grief, yet not the same;
 Her heart confess'd a gentler flame: 260
 But yet that heart, alarm'd or weak,
 She knew not why, forbade to speak.
 Yet speak she must — but when essay ?
 'How strange he thus should turn away !
 Not thus we e'er before have met;
 Not thus shall be our parting yet.'
 Thrice paced she slowly through the room,
 And watch'd his eye — it still was fix'd:
 She snatch'd the urn wherein was mix'd
 The Persian Atar-gul's perfume, 270
 And sprinkled all its odours o'er
 The pictured roof and marble floor:
 The drops, that through his glittering
 vest
 The playful girl's appeal address'd,
 Unheeded o'er his bosom flew,
 As if that breast were marble too.
 'What, sullen yet ? it must not be —
 Oh ! gentle Selim, this from thee !'
 She saw in curious order set 279
 The fairest flowers of eastern land —
 'He loved them once; may touch them yet,
 If offer'd by Zuleika's hand.'
 The childish thought was hardly
 breathed
 Before the Rose was pluck'd and
 wreathed;
 The next fond moment saw her seat
 Her fairy form at Selim's feet:
 'This rose to calm my brother's cares
 A message from the Bulbul bears;

It says to-night he will prolong
 For Selim's ear his sweetest song; 290
 And though his note is somewhat sad,
 He'll try for once a strain more glad,
 With some faint hope his alter'd lay
 May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI

'What! not receive my foolish flower?
 Nay then I am indeed unblest:
 On me can thus thy forehead lower?
 And know'st thou not who loves thee
 best?

Oh, Selim dear! oh, more than dearest!
 Say, is it me thou hat'st or fearest? 300
 Come, lay thy head upon my breast,
 And I will kiss thee into rest,
 Since words of mine, and songs must fail,
 Ev'n from my fabled nightingale.

I knew our sire at times was stern,
 But this from thee had yet to learn:
 Too well I know he loves thee not;
 But is Zuleika's love forgot?

Ah! deem I right? the Pacha's plan —
 This kinsman Bey of Carasman 310

Perhaps may prove some foe of thine;
 If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine,
 If shrines that ne'er approach allow
 To woman's step admit her vow,
 Without thy free consent, command,
 The Sultan should not have my hand!
 Think'st thou that I could bear to part
 With thee, and learn to halve my heart?
 Ah! were I sever'd from thy side,
 Where were thy friend — and who my
 guide? 320

Years have not seen, Time shall not
 see

The hour that tears my soul from thee:
 Even Azrael, from his deadly quiver

When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
 That parts all else, shall doom for ever
 Our hearts to undivided dust!

XII

He lived — he breathed — he moved —
 he felt;

He raised the maid from where she knelt;
 His trance was gone — his keen eye shone
 With thoughts that long in darkness
 dwelt; 330

With thoughts that burn — in rays that
 melt.

As the stream late conceal'd
 By the fringe of its willows,

When it rushes reveal'd

In the light of its billows;
 As the bolt bursts on high

From the black cloud that bound it,
 Flash'd the soul of that eye

Through the long lashes round it.
 A war-horse at the trumpet's sound, 34

A lion roused by heedless hound,
 A tyrant waked to sudden strife

By graze of ill-directed knife,
 Starts not to more convulsive life
 Than he, who heard that vow, display'd,
 And all, before repress'd, betray'd:

'Now thou art mine, for ever mine,
 With life to keep, and scarce with life
 resign;

Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
 Though sworn by one, hath bound us both.
 Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done; 351

That vow hath saved more heads than one;
 But blench not thou — thy simplest treas

Claims more from me than tenderness;
 I would not wrong the slenderest hair,

That clusters round thy forehead fair,
 For all the treasures buried far

Within the caves of Istakar.

This morning clouds upon me lower'd,
 Reproaches on my head were shower'd,

And Giaffir almost call'd me coward! 361

Now I have motive to be brave;
 The son of his neglected slave, —

Nay, start not, 't was the term he gave, —
 May show, though little apt to vaunt,

A heart his words nor deeds can daunt.
 His son, indeed! — yet, thanks to thee,

Perchance I am, at least shall be;
 But let our plighted secret vow

Be only known to us as now. 370

I know the wretch who dares demand
 From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;

More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
 Holds not a Musselim's control:

Was he not bred in Egripo?
 A viler race let Israel show;

But let that pass — to none be told
 Our oath; the rest shall time unfold.

To me and mine leave Osman Bey;
 I've partisans for peril's day: 380

Think not I am what I appear;
 I've arms, and friends, and vengeance
 near.'

XIII

'Think not thou art what thou appearest!
 My Selim, thou art sadly changed:

This morn I saw thee gentlest, dearest;
But now thou'rt from thyself estranged.

My love thou surely knew'st before,
It ne'er was less, nor can be more.
To see thee, hear thee, near thee stay,
And hate the night I know not why,
Save that we meet not but by day; 391
With thee to live, with thee to die,
I dare not to my hope deny:

Thy cheek, thine eyes, thy lips to kiss,
Like this — and this — no more than this:
For, Alla! sure thy lips are flame:

What fever in thy veins is flushing?
My own have nearly caught the same,
At least I feel my cheek, too, blushing.
To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health,
Partake, but never waste thy wealth, 401
Or stand with smiles un murmuring by,
And lighten half thy poverty;

Do all but close thy dying eye,
For that I could not live to try;
To these alone my thoughts aspire:
More can I do? or thou require?
But, Selim, thou must answer why
We need so much of mystery:
The cause I cannot dream nor tell, 410
But be it, since thou say'st 't is well;
Yet what thou mean'st by "arms" and
"friends,"

Beyond my weaker sense extends.
I meant that Giaffir should have heard
The very vow I plighted thee;
His wrath would not revoke my word:
But surely he would leave me free.
Can this fond wish seem strange in
me,

To be what I have ever been?
What other hath Zuleika seen 420
From simple childhood's earliest hour?

What other can she seek to see
Than thee, companion of her bower,
The partner of her infancy?
These cherish'd thoughts with life begun,
Say, why must I no more avow?
What change is wrought to make me
shun

The truth; my pride, and thine till
now?

To meet the gaze of stranger's eyes
Our law, our creed, our God denies; 430
Nor shall one wandering thought of mine
At such, our Prophet's will, repine:
No! happier made by that decree!
He left me all in leaving thee.

Deep were my anguish, thus compell'd
To wed with one I ne'er beheld:
This wherefore should I not reveal?
Why wilt thou urge me to conceal?
I know the Pacha's haughty mood
To thee hath never boded good; 440
And he so often storms at nought,
Allah! forbid that e'er he ought!
And why, I know not, but within
My heart concealment weighs like sin.
If then such secrecy be crime,
And such it feels while lurking here;
Oh, Selim! tell me yet in time,
Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.
Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar,
My father leaves the mimic war; 450
I tremble now to meet his eye —
Say, Selim, canst thou tell me why?

XIV

'Zuleika, to thy tower's retreat
Betake thee — Giaffir I can greet:
And now with him I fain must prate
Of firmans, imposts, levies, state.
There's fearful news from Danube's
banks,

Our Vizier nobly thins his ranks,
For which the Giaour may give him
thanks!

Our Sultan hath a shorter way 460
Such costly triumph to repay.

But, mark me, when the twilight drum
Hath warn'd the troops to food and
sleep,

Unto thy cell will Selim come:
Then softly from the Haram creep
Where we may wander by the deep:

Our garden-battlements are steep;
Nor these will rash intruder climb
To list our words, or stint our time;
And if he doth, I want not steel 470
Which some have felt, and more may feel.
Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
Than thou hast heard or thought before:
Trust me, Zuleika — fear not me!
Thou know'st I hold a Haram key.'

'Fear thee, my Selim! ne'er till now
Did word like this —'

'Delay not thou;
I keep the key — and Haroun's guard
Have some, and hope of more reward.
To-night, Zuleika, thou shalt hear 480
My tale, my purpose, and my fear:
I am not, love! what I appear.'

CANTO THE SECOND

I

THE winds are high on Helle's wave,
 As on that night of stormy water
 When Love, who sent, forgot to save
 The young, the beautiful, the brave,
 The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter.
 Oh ! when alone along the sky
 Her turret-torch was blazing high,
 Though rising gale and breaking foam
 And shrieking sea-birds warn'd him
 home;
 And clouds aloft and tides below, 10
 With signs and sounds, forbade to go,
 He could not see, he would not hear,
 Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
 His eye but saw that light of love,
 The only star it hail'd above;
 His ear but rang with Hero's song,
 'Ye waves, divide not lovers long !' —
 That tale is old, but love anew
 May nerve young hearts to prove as true.

II

The winds are high, and Helle's tide 20
 Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
 And Night's descending shadows hide
 That field with blood bedew'd in
 vain,
 The desert of old Priam's pride;
 The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
 All — save immortal dreams that could
 beguile
 The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle !

III

Oh ! yet — for there my steps have been:
 These feet have press'd the sacred
 shore,
 These limbs that buoyant wave hath
 borne — 30
 Minstrel ! with thee to muse, to mourn,
 To trace again those fields of yore,
 Believing every hillock green
 Contains no fabled hero's ashes,
 And that around the undoubted scene
 Thine own 'broad Hellespont' still
 dashes,
 Be long my lot ! and cold were he
 Who there could gaze denying thee !

IV

The night hath closed on Helle's stream,
 Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill 40

That moon, which shone on his high
 theme:

No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
 But conscious shepherds bless it still.
 Their flocks are grazing on the mound
 Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow:
 That mighty heap of gather'd ground
 Which Ammon's son ran proudly round,
 By nations raised, by monarchs crown'd,
 Is now a lone and nameless barrow !
 Within — thy dwelling-place how nar-
 row ! 50

Without — can only strangers breathe
 The name of him that was beneath:
 Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
 But Thou — thy very dust is gone !

V

Late, late to-night will Dian cheer
 The swain, and chase the boatman's fear;
 Till then — no beacon on the cliff
 May shape the course of struggling skiff;
 The scatter'd lights that skirt the bay,
 All, one by one, have died away;
 The only lamp of this lone hour
 Is glimmering in Zuleika's tower.
 Yes ! there is light in that lone chamber,
 And o'er her silken Ottoman
 Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,
 O'er which her fairy fingers ran;
 Near these, with emerald rays beset
 (How could she thus that gem forget ?),
 Her mother's sainted amulet,
 Whereon engraved the Koorsee text 70
 Could smoothe this life and win the next:
 And by her comboloio lies
 A Koran of illumined dyes;
 And many a bright emblazon'd rhyme
 By Persian scribes redeem'd from time;
 And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
 Reclines her now neglected lute;
 And round her lamp of fretted gold
 Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;
 The richest work of Iran's loom, 80
 And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;
 All that can eye or sense delight
 Are gather'd in that gorgeous room:
 But yet it hath an air of gloom.
 She, of this Peri cell the sprite,
 What doth she hence, and on so rude a
 night ?

VI

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
 Which none save noblest Moalem wear,

To guard from winds of heaven the
breast

As heaven itself to Selim dear, 90
With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow meanings made,
Till, on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side?
How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII

They reach'd at length a grotto, hewn 100
By nature but enlarged by art,
Where oft her lute she wont to tune,
And oft her Koran conn'd apart;
And oft in youthful revery
She dream'd what Paradise might be:
Where woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdain'd to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure,
Nor deem'd she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss, 110
Without her, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seem'd wrought within the
grot.
It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw
A ray of no celestial hue;
But in a nook within the cell 120
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as wield
The turban'd Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red — perchance with guilt!
Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet.
What may this mean? she turn'd to see
Her Selim — 'Oh! can this be he?' 130

IX

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crown'd turban bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples
wore.

That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glitter'd at his waist,
Where pistols unadorn'd were braced;
And from his belt a sabre swung,
And from his shoulder loosely hung 140
The cloak of white; the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiate;
Beneath, his golden plated vest
Clung like a cuirass to his breast;
The greaves below his knee that wound
With silvery scales were sheathed and
bound.

But were it not that high command
Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand,
All that a careless eye could see
In him was some young Galiongée. 150

X

'I said I was not what I seem'd,
And now thou see'st my words were
true;
I have a tale thou hast not dream'd,
If sooth — its truth must others rue.
My story now 't were vain to hide,
I must not see thee Osman's bride:
But had not thine own lips declared
How much of that young heart I shared,
I could not, must not, yet have shown
The darker secret of my own. 160
In this I speak not now of love;
That, let time, truth, and peril prove:
But first — Oh! never wed another —
Zuleika! I am not thy brother!'

XI

'Oh! not my brother! — yet unsay —
God! am I left alone on earth
To mourn — I dare not curse — the day
That saw my solitary birth?
Oh! thou wilt love me now no more!
My sinking heart foreboded ill; 170
But know me all I was before,
Thy sister — friend — Zuleika still.
Thou led'st me here perchance to kill;
If thou hast cause for vengeance, see!
My breast is offer'd — take thy fill!
Far better with the dead to be
Than live thus nothing now to thee:
Perhaps far worse, for now I know
Why Giaffir always seem'd thy foe;
And I, alas! am Giaffir's child, 180
For whom thou wert contemn'd, reviled.
If not thy sister — wouldst thou save
My life, Oh! bid me be thy slave!'

XII

'My slave, Zuleika! — nay, I'm thine:
 But, gentle love, this transport calm,
 Thy lot shall yet be link'd with mine;
 I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
 And be that thought thy sorrow's balm.
 So may the Koran verse display'd
 Upon its steel direct my blade 190
 In danger's hour to guard us both,
 As I preserve that awful oath!
 The name in which thy heart hath prided
 Must change; but, my Zuleika, know,
 That tie is widen'd, not divided,
 Although thy Sire's my deadliest foe.
 My father was to Giaffir all
 That Selim late was deem'd to thee;
 That brother wrought a brother's fall,
 But spared, at least, my infancy; 200
 And lull'd me with a vain deceit
 That yet a like return may meet.
 He rear'd me, not with tender help,
 But like the nephew of a Cain;
 He watch'd me like a lion's whelp,
 That gnaws and yet may break his
 chain.
 My father's blood in every vein
 Is boiling; but for thy dear sake
 No present vengeance will I take;
 Though here I must no more remain.
 But first, beloved Zuleika! hear 211
 How Giaffir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII

'How first their strife to rancour grew,
 If love or envy made them foes,
 It matters little if I knew;
 In fiery spirits, slights, though few
 And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
 In war Abdallah's arm was strong,
 Remember'd yet in Bosniac song,
 And Paswan's rebel hordes attest 220
 How little love they bore such guest:
 His death is all I need relate,
 The stern effect of Giaffir's hate;
 And how my birth, disclosed to me,
 Whate'er beside it makes, hath made me
 free.

XIV

'When Paswan, after years of strife,
 At last for power, but first for life,
 In Widdin's walls too proudly sate,
 Our Pachas rallied round the state;
 Nor last nor least in high command, 230
 Each brother led a separate band;

They gave their horse-tails to the wind,
 And mustering in Sophia's plain
 Their tents were pitch'd, their post as-
 sign'd;
 To one, alas! assign'd in vain!
 What need of words? the deadly bowl,
 By Giaffir's orders drugg'd and given,
 With venom subtle as his soul,
 Dismiss'd Abdallah's hence to heaven.
 Reclined and feverish in the bath, 240
 He, when the hunter's sport was up,
 But little deem'd a brother's wrath
 To quench his thirst had such a cup:
 The bowl a bribed attendant bore;
 He drank one draught nor needed more!
 If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
 Call Haroun — he can tell it out.

XV

'The deed once done, and Paswan's feud
 In part suppress'd, though ne'er subdued,
 Abdallah's Pachalick was gain'd. 250
 Thou know'st not what in our Divan
 Can wealth procure for worse than man:
 Abdallah's honours were obtain'd
 By him a brother's murder stain'd;
 'Tis true, the purchase nearly drain'd
 His ill got treasure, soon replaced.
 Wouldst question whence? Survey the
 waste,
 And ask the squalid peasant how
 His gains repay his broiling brow! —
 Why me the stern usurper spared, 260
 Why thus with me his palace shared,
 I know not. Shame, regret, remorse,
 And little fear from infant's force;
 Besides, adoption as a son
 By him whom Heaven accorded none,
 Or some unknown cabal, caprice,
 Preserved me thus; — but not in peace:
 He cannot curb his haughty mood,
 Nor I forgive a father's blood.

XVI

'Within thy father's house are foes; 270
 Not all who break his bread are true:
 To these should I my birth disclose,
 His days, his very hours were few:
 They only want a heart to lead,
 A hand to point them to the deed.
 But Haroun only knows, or knew
 This tale whose close is almost nigh:
 He in Abdallah's palace grew,
 And held that post in his Serai
 Which holds he here — he saw him die.

But what could single slavery do ? 281
 Avenge his lord ? alas ! too late ;
 Or save his son from such a fate ?
 He chose the last, and when elate
 With foes subdued, or friends betray'd,
 Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
 He led me helpless to his gate,
 And not in vain it seems essay'd
 To save the life for which he pray'd.
 The knowledge of my birth secured 290
 From all and each, but most from me,
 Thus Giaffir's safety was ensured.
 Removed he too from Roumelie
 To this our Asiatic side,
 Far from our seats by Danube's tide,
 With none but Haroun, who retains
 Such knowledge — and that Nubian feels
 A tyrant's secrets are but chains,
 From which the captive gladly steals,
 And this and more to me reveals : 300
 Such still to guilt just Alla sends —
 Slaves, tools, accomplices — no friends !

XVII

'All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds ;
 But harsher still my tale must be :
 Howe'er my tongue thy softness wounds,
 Yet I must prove all truth to thee.
 I saw thee start this garb to see,
 Yet is it one I oft have worn,
 And long must wear : this Galiongée,
 To whom thy plighted vow is sworn, 310
 Is leader of those pirate hordes
 Whose laws and lives are on their
 swords ;
 To hear whose desolating tale
 Would make thy waning cheek more pale.
 Those arms thou see'st my band have
 brought,
 The hands that wield are not remote ;
 This cup too for the rugged knaves
 Is fill'd — once quaff'd, they ne'er re-
 pine :
 Our Prophet might forgive the slaves ;
 They're only infidels in wine. 320

XVIII

'What could I be ? Proscribed at home,
 And taunted to a wish to roam ;
 And listless left — for Giaffir's fear
 Denied the courser and the spear —
 Though oft — Oh, Mahomet ! how oft ! —
 In full Divan the despot scoff'd,
 As if my weak unwilling hand
 Refused the bridle or the brand.

He ever went to war alone,
 And pent me here untried, unknown ; 330
 To Haroun's care with women left,
 By hope unblest, of fame bereft,
 While thou — whose softness long en-
 dear'd,
 Thought it unmann'd me, still had cheer'd —
 To Brusa's walls for safety sent,
 Awaitedst there the field's event.
 Haroun, who saw my spirit pining
 Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke,
 His captive, though with dread resign-
 ing,
 My thralldom for a season broke, 340
 On promise to return before
 The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
 'Tis vain — my tongue can not impart
 My almost drunkenness of heart,
 When first this liberated eye
 Survey'd Earth, Ocean, Sun, and Sky,
 As if my spirit pierced them through,
 And all their inmost wonders knew !
 One word alone can paint to thee
 That more than feeling — I was Free !
 E'en for thy presence ceased to pine ; 351
 The World — nay, Heaven itself was
 mine !

XIX

'The shallop of a trusty Moor
 Convey'd me from this idle shore ;
 I long'd to see the isles that gem
 Old Ocean's purple diadem :
 I sought by turns, and saw them all.
 But when and where I join'd the crew,
 With whom I'm pledged to rise or fall
 When all that we design to do 360
 Is done, 't will then be time more meet
 To tell thee, when the tale's complete.

XX

'T is true, they are a lawless brood,
 But rough in form, nor mild in mood ;
 And every creed and every race
 With them hath found, may find a place :
 But open speech, and ready hand,
 Obedience to their chief's command ;
 A soul for every enterprise,
 That never sees with Terror's eyes ; 370
 Friendship for each, and faith to all,
 And vengeance vow'd for those who fall,
 Have made them fitting instruments
 For more than ev'n my own intents.
 And some — and I have studied all
 Distinguish'd from the vulgar rank,

But chiefly to my council call
 The wisdom of the cautious Frank —
 And some to higher thoughts aspire.
 The last of Lambro's patriots there 380
 Anticipated freedom share;
 And oft around the cavern fire
 On visionary schemes debate,
 To snatch the Rayahs from their fate.
 So let them ease their hearts with prate
 Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew;
 I have a love for freedom too.
 Ay! let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam,
 Or only know on land the Tartar's home!
 My tent on shore, my galley on the sea, 390
 Are more than cities and Serais to me:
 Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
 Across the desert, or before the gale,
 Bound where thou wilt, my barb! or glide,
 my prow!
 But be the star that guides the wanderer,
 Thou!
 Thou, my Zuleika, share and bless my
 bark;
 The Dove of peace and promise to mine
 ark!
 Or, since that hope denied in worlds of
 strife,
 Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life!
 The evening beam that smiles the clouds
 away, 400
 And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!
 Blest — as the Muezzin's strain from
 Mecca's wall
 To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his
 call;
 Soft — as the melody of youthful days,
 That steals the trembling tear of speech-
 less praise;
 Dear — as his native song to Exile's ears,
 Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice
 endears.
 For thee in those bright isles is built a
 bower
 Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour.
 A thousand swords, with Selim's heart and
 hand, 410
 Wait — wave — defend — destroy — at thy
 command!
 Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
 The spoil of nations shall bedeck my bride.
 The Haram's languid years of listless ease
 Are well resign'd for cares — for joys like
 these.
 Not blind to fate, I see, where'er I rove,
 Unnumber'd perils, — but one only love!

Yet well my toils shall that fond breast re-
 pay,
 Though fortune frown, or false friends
 betray.
 How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
 Should all be changed, to find thee faithful
 still! 421
 Be but thy soul, like Selim's, firmly shown;
 To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;
 To soothe each sorrow, share in each de-
 light,
 Blend every thought, do all — but dis-
 unite!
 Once free, 't is mine our horde again to
 guide;
 Friends to each other, foes to aught beside:
 Yet there we follow but the bent assign'd
 By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
 Mark! where his carnage and his con-
 quests cease! 437
 He makes a solitude, and calls it — peace!
 I, like the rest, must use my skill or
 strength,
 But ask no land beyond my sabre's length:
 Power sways but by division, her resource
 The blest alternative of fraud or force!
 Ours be the last; in time deceit may come
 When cities cage us in a social home:
 There ev'n thy soul might err — how oft
 the heart
 Corruption shakes which peril could not
 part!
 And woman, more than man, when death
 or woe 440
 Or even Disgrace would lay her lover low,
 Sunk in the lap of Luxury will shame —
 Away suspicion! — not Zuleika's name!
 But life is hazard at the best; and here
 No more remains to win, and much to fear:
 Yes, fear! — the doubt, the dread of losing
 thee,
 By Osman's power, and Giaffir's stern de-
 cree.
 That dread shall vanish with the favouring
 gale,
 Which love to-night hath promised to my
 sail:
 No danger daunts the pair his smile hath
 blest, 450
 Their steps still roving, but their hearts at
 rest.
 With thee all toils are sweet, each clime
 hath charms;
 Earth — sea alike — our world within our
 arms!

Ay — let the loud winds whistle o'er the deck,
So that those arms cling closer round my neck:

The deepest murmur of this lip shall be
No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee !
The war of elements no fears impart
To Love, whose deadliest bane is human Art:
There lie the only rocks our course can
check; 460

Here moments menace — *there* are years of
wreck !

But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's
shape !

This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
Few words remain of mine my tale to
close;

Of thine but *one* to waft us from our foes;
Yea, foes — to me will Giaffir's hate de-
cline ?

And is not Osman, who would part us,
thine ?

XXI

'His head and faith from doubt and death
Return'd in time my guard to save;

Few heard, none told, that o'er the wave
From isle to isle I roved the while: 471

And since, though parted from my band,
Too seldom now I leave the land,
No deed they've done, nor deed shall do,
Ere I have heard and doom'd it too:

I form the plan, decree the spoil,
'T is fit I oftener share the toil.

But now too long I've held thine ear;
Time presses, floats my bark, and here
We leave behind but hate and fear. 480

To-morrow Osman with his train
Arrives — to-night must break thy chain:
And would'st thou save that haughty Bey,

Perchance, *his* life who gave thee thine,
With me this hour away — away !

But yet, though thou art plighted mine,
Would'st thou recall thy willing vow,
Appall'd by truths imparted now,
Here rest I — not to see thee wed:
But be that peril on my head !' 490

XXII

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
Stood like that statue of distress,
When, her last hope for ever gone,
The mother harden'd into stone;
All in the maid that eye could see
Was but a younger Niobé.

But ere her lip, or even her eye,
Essay'd to speak, or look reply,
Beneath the garden's wicket porch
Far flash'd on high a blazing torch ! 500
Another — and another — and another —
'Oh ! fly — no more — yet now my more
than brother !'

Far, wide, through every thicket spread,
The fearful lights are gleaming red;
Nor these alone, for each right hand
Is ready with a sheathless brand.

They part, pursue, return, and wheel
With searching flambeau, shining steel;
And last of all, his sabre waving,
Stern Giaffir in his fury raving: 510
And now almost they touch the cave —
Oh ! must that grot be Selim's grave ?

XXIII

Dauntless he stood ! — 'T is come — soon
past —

One kiss, Zuleika — 't is my last.
But yet my band not far from shore
May hear this signal, see the flash;
Yet now too few — the attempt were
rash:

No matter — yet one effort more.'
Forth to the cavern mouth he stept;

His pistol's echo rang on high, 520
Zuleika started not, nor wept,
Despair benumb'd her breast and
eye ! —

'They hear me not, or if they ply
Their oars, 't is but to see me die;
That sound hath drawn my foes more
nigh.

Then forth my father's scimitar,
Thou ne'er hast seen less equal war !
Farewell, Zuleika ! — Sweet ! retire:

Yet stay within — here linger safe,
At thee his rage will only chafe. 530

Stir not, lest even to thee perchance
Some erring blade or ball should glance.
Fear'st thou for him ? — may I expire
If in this strife I seek thy sire !

No — though by him that poison pour'd:
No — though again he call me coward !
But tamely shall I meet their steel ?
No — as each crest save *his* may feel !'

XXIV

One bound he made, and gain'd the sand:
Already at his feet hath sunk 540
The foremost of the prying band,
A gasping head, a quivering trunk.

Another falls — but round him close
 A swarming circle of his foes;
 From right to left his path he cleft,
 And almost met the meeting wave:
 His boat appears — not five oars' length —
 His comrades strain with desperate
 strength —

Oh! are they yet in time to save?
 His feet the foremost breakers lave; 550
 His band are plunging in the bay,
 Their sabres glitter through the spray;
 Wet — wild — unwearied to the strand
 They struggle — now they touch the land!
 They come — 't is but to add to slaughter —

His heart's best blood is on the water.

XXV

Escaped from shot, unharm'd by steel,
 Or scarcely grazed its force to feel,
 Had Selim won, betray'd, beset,
 To where the strand and billows met; 560
 There as his last step left the land,
 And the last death-blow dealt his hand —
 Ah! wherefore did he turn to look

For her his eye but sought in vain?
 That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
 Hath doom'd his death, or fix'd his
 chain.

Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
 How late will Lover's hope remain
 His back was to the dashing spray;
 Behind, but close, his comrades lay, 570
 When, at the instant, hiss'd the ball —

'So may the foes of Giaffir fall!
 Whose voice is heard? whose carbine
 rang?

Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
 Too nearly, deadly aim'd to err?
 'T is thine — Abdallah's Murderer!
 The father slowly rued thy hate,
 The son hath found a quicker fate:
 Fast from his breast the blood is bub-
 bling,

The whiteness of the sea-foam trou-
 bling, — 580

If aught his lips essay'd to groan,
 The rushing billows choked the tone!

XXVI

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away;
 Few trophies of the fight are there:
 The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
 Are silent; but some signs of fray
 That strand of strife may bear,

And fragments of each shiver'd brand;
 Steps stamp'd; and dash'd into the sand
 The print of many a struggling hand 590
 May there be mark'd; nor far remote

A broken torch, an earless boat;
 And tangled on the weeds that heap
 The beach where shelving to the deep
 There lies a white capote!

'T is rent in twain — one dark-red stain
 The wave yet ripples o'er in vain:

But where is he who wore?
 Ye, who would o'er his relics weep,
 Go, seek them where the surges sweep
 Their burthen round Sigæum's steep 600
 And cast on Lemnos' shore.

The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
 O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
 As shaken on his restless pillow,
 His head heaves with the heaving billow;
 That hand, whose motion is not life,
 Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
 Flung by the tossing tide on high,

Then levell'd with the wave — 610
 What recks it, though that corse shall lie
 Within a living grave?

The bird that tears that prostrate form
 Hath only robb'd the meaner worm;
 The only heart, the only eye
 Had bled or wept to see him die,
 Had seen those scatter'd limbs composed,
 And mourn'd above his turban stone,
 That heart hath burst — that eye was
 closed —

Yea — closed before his own! 620

XXVII

By Helle's stream there is a voice of wail!
 And woman's eye is wet, man's cheek is
 pale:

Zuleika! last of Giaffir's race,
 Thy destined lord is come too late:
 He sees not — ne'er shall see thy face!

Can he not hear
 The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant
 ear?

Thy handmaids weeping at the gate,
 The Koran-chanters of the hymn of fate,
 The silent slaves with folded arms that
 wait, 630

Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
 Tell him thy tale!

Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
 That fearful moment when he left the
 cave

Thy heart grew chill:

He was thy hope — thy joy — thy love —
thine all —

And that last thought on him thou couldst
not save

Sufficed to kill;

Burst forth in one wild cry — and all was
still.

Peace to thy broken heart and virgin
grave! 640

Ah, happy! but of life to lose the worst!
That grief — though deep — though fatal —
was thy first!

Thrice happy! ne'er to feel nor fear the
force

Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, re-
morse!

And, oh! that pang where more than Mad-
ness lies!

The worm that will not sleep — and never
dies;

Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly
night,

That dreads the darkness and yet loathes
the light,

That winds around and tears the quivering
heart!

Ah, wherefore not consume it — and de-
part! — 650

Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting chief!
Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy
head,

Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs dost
spread:

By that same hand Abdallah — Selim
bled.

Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's
bed,

She, whom thy sultan had but seen to wed,
Thy Daughter's dead!

Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely
beam,

The Star hath set that shone on Helle's
stream. 660

What quench'd its ray? — the blood that
thou hast shed!

Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:
'Where is my child?' an Echo answers —
'Where?'

XXVIII

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above

The sad but living cypress glooms,
And withers not though branch and leaf

Are stamp'd with an eternal grief

Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms, 670

Ev'n in that deadly grove —

A single rose is shedding there

Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:

It looks as planted by Despair —

So white — so faint — the slightest gale

Might whirl the leaves on high;

And yet, though storms and blight as-
sail,

And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem — in
vain —

To-morrow sees it bloom again! 680

The stalk some spirit gently rears,

And waters with celestial tears;

For well may maids of Helle deem

That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering

hour,

And buds unshelter'd by a bower;

Nor droops, though spring refuse her
shower,

Nor woos the summer beam.

To it the livelong night there sings

A bird unseen — but not remote: 690

Invisible his airy wings,

But soft as harp that Houri strings

His long entrancing note!

It were the Bulbul; but his throat,

Though mournful, pours not such a
strain;

For they who listen cannot leave

The spot, but linger there and grieve,

As if they loved in vain!

And yet so sweet the tears they shed,

'Tis sorrow so unmix'd with dread, 700

They scarce can bear the morn to break.

That melancholy spell,

And longer yet would weep and wake,

He sings so wild and well!

But when the day-blush bursts from
high,

Expires that magic melody.

And some have been who could believe

(So fondly youthful dreams deceive,

Yet harsh be they that blame)

That note so piercing and profound 710

Will shape and syllable its sound

Into Zuleika's name.

'T is from her cypress summit heard,

That melts in air the liquid word:

'T is from her lowly virgin earth

That white rose takes its tender birth.

There late was laid a marble stone;
 Eve saw it placed — the Morrow
 gone!
 It was no mortal arm that bore
 That deep-fix'd pillar to the shore; 720
 For there, as Helle's legends tell,
 Next morn 't was found where Selim
 fell;
 Lash'd by the tumbling tide, whose
 wave
 Denied his bones a holier grave.
 And there by night, reclined, 't is
 said,
 Is seen a ghastly turban'd head:
 And hence extended by the billow,
 'Tis named the 'Pirate-phantom's
 pillow!'
 Where first it lay that mourning
 flower
 Hath flourish'd; flourisheth this
 hour, 730
 Alone and dewy, coldly pure and
 pale;
 As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sor-
 row's tale!

SONNET TO LAKE LEMAN

[First published with the *Prisoner of Chillon*,
 in 1816.]

ROUSSEAU, Voltaire, our Gibbon, and De
 Staël —
 Leman! these names are worthy of thy
 shore,
 Thy shore of names like these! — Wert
 thou no more,
 Their memory thy remembrance would re-
 call:
 To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
 But they have made them lovelier, for
 the lore
 Of mighty minds doth hallow in the
 core
 Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
 Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but
 by thee,
 How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we
 feel,
 In sweetly gliding o'er the crystal sea,
 The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
 Which of the heirs of immortality
 Is proud, and makes the breath of glory
 real!

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A FABLE

[Publ. 1816]

SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!
 Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou
 art,
 For there thy habitation is the heart —
 The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
 And when thy sons to fetters are con-
 sign'd —
 To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless
 gloom,
 Their country conquers with their mar-
 tyrdom,
 And Freedom's fame finds wings on every
 wind.
 Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
 And thy sad floor an altar; for 'twas
 trod,
 Until his very steps have left a trace
 Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod.
 By Bonnivard! — May none those marks
 efface!
 For they appeal from tyranny to God.

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
 Nor grew it white
 In a single night,
 As men's have grown from sudden fears.
 My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil.
 But rusted with a vile repose,
 For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
 And mine has been the fate of those
 To whom the goodly earth and air
 Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare. n
 But this was for my father's faith,
 I suffer'd chains and courted death;
 That father perish'd at the stake
 For tenets he would not forsake;
 And for the same his lineal race
 In darkness found a dwelling-place.
 We were seven — who now are one,
 Six in youth — and one in age,
 Finish'd as they had begun,
 Prond of Persecution's rage; n
 One in fire, and two in field,
 Their belief with blood have seal'd,
 Dying as their father died,
 For the God their foes denied;

Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and
grey,

Dim with a dull imprison'd ray, 30
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp.

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;

That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away, 40
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight.

And thus together, yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'T was still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old, 60
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,

A grating sound — not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
I ought to do — and did my best;
And each did well in his degree.

The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven —

For him my soul was sorely moved.
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day 80
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles being free) —
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' illa;
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe 90
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank

With joy: — but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline —
And so perchance in sooth did mine: 100
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of illa.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110
From Chillon's snow-white battlement
Which round about the wave intrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky; 120
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,

Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare, 130
And for the like had little care.
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould 140
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side.
But why delay the truth? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,

To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died — and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave 150
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer;
They coldly laugh'd — and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above 160
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be 170
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —

He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood: —
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow.
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb, 190
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost 200
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less.
I listen'd, but I could not hear —
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonish'd.
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
And rush'd to him: — I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived — I only drew
The accurs'd breath of dungeon-dew;
The last — the sole — the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still, 220
Alas! my own was full as chill,
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,

I had no earthly hope — but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

230

IX

What next befell me then and there

I know not well — I never knew;
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too.

I had no thought, no feeling — none —

Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;

For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night — it was not day,

240

It was not even the dungeon-light

So hateful to my heavy sight,

But vacancy absorbing space,

And fixedness — without a place;

There were no stars, no earth, no time,

No check, no change, no good, no
crime —

But silence, and a stirless breath

Which neither was of life nor death;

A sea of stagnant idleness,

Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless !

250

X

A light broke in upon my brain, —

It was the carol of a bird;

It ceased, and then it came again,

The sweetest song ear ever heard,

And mine was thankful till my eyes

Ran over with the glad surprise,

And they that moment could not see

I was the mate of misery.

But then by dull degrees came back

My senses to their wonted track;

260

I saw the dungeon walls and floor

Close slowly round me as before,

I saw the glimmer of the sun

Creeping as it before had done,

But through the crevice where it came

That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,

And tamer than upon the tree;

A lovely bird, with azure wings,

And song that said a thousand things,

And seem'd to say them all for me !

270

I never saw its like before,

I ne'er shall see its likeness more:

It seem'd like me to want a mate,

But was not half so desolate,

And it was come to love me when

None lived to love me so again,

And cheering from my dungeon's brink,

Had brought me back to feel and think.

I know not if it late were free,

Or broke its cage to perch on mine,

280

But knowing well captivity,

Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !

Or if it were, in winged guise,

A visitant from Paradise;

For — Heaven forgive that thought ! the
while

Which made me both to weep and smile —

I sometimes deem'd that it might be

My brother's soul come down to me;

But then at last away it flew,

And then 't was mortal — well I knew,

290

For he would never thus have flown,

And left me twice so doubly lone, —

Lone — as the corse within its shroud,

Lone — as a solitary cloud,

A single cloud on a sunny day,

While all the rest of heaven is clear,

A frown upon the atmosphere

That hath no business to appear

When skies are blue and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,

300

My keepers grew compassionate;

I know not what had made them so,

They were inured to sights of woe,

But so it was: — my broken chain

With links unfasten'd did remain,

And it was liberty to stride

Along my cell from side to side,

And up and down, and then athwart,

And tread it over every part;

And round the pillars one by one,

310

Returning where my walk begun,

Avoiding only, as I trod,

My brothers' graves without a sod;

For if I thought with heedless tread

My step profaned their lowly bed,

My breath came gaspingly and thick,

And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,

It was not therefrom to escape,

For I had buried one and all

320

Who loved me in a human shape;

And the whole earth would henceforth
be

A wider prison unto me.

No child, no sire, no kin had I,

No partner in my misery;

I thought of this, and I was glad,

For thought of them had made me mad;

But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them — and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down. 340
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;

A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
And in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing
Of gentle breath and hue. 350

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled and would fain
I had not left my recent chain.
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save;
And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days —
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote.
At last men came to set me free, 370
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,

I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own !

And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home. 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they ?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to
tell !

In quiet we had learn'd to dwell —
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends 390
To make us what we are : — even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

MAZEPPA

[Publ. 1819]

ADVERTISEMENT

Celui qui remplissait alors cette place était un gentilhomme Polonois, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le palatinat de Podolie : il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres. Une intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d'un gentilhomme Polonois ayant été découverte, le mari le fit lier tout nu sur un cheval farouche, et le laissa aller en cet état. Le cheval, qui était du pays de l'Ukraine, y retourna, et y porta Mazeppa, demi-mort de fatigue et de faim. Quelques paysans le secoururent : il resta longtems parmi eux, et se signala dans plusieurs courses contre les Tartares. La supériorité de ses lumières lui donna une grande considération parmi les Cosaques : sa réputation s'augmentant de jour en jour obligea le Czar à le faire Prince de l'Ukraine. — VOLTAIRE, *Hist. de Charles XII.*, p. 196.

Le roi fuyant, et poursuivi, eut son cheval tué sous lui ; le Colonel Gieta, blessé, et perdant tout son sang, lui donna le sien. Ainsi on remit deux fois à cheval, dans la fuite, ce conquérant qui n'avait pu y monter pendant la bataille. — p. 216.

Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quelques cavaliers. Le carrosse où il était rompit dans la marche ; on le remit à cheval. Pour comble de disgrâce, il s'égarait pendant la nuit dans un bois ; là, son courage ne pouvant plus suppléer à ses forces épuisées, les douleurs de sa blessure devenues plus insupportables par la fatigue, son cheval étant tombé de lassitude, il se coucha quelques heures au pied d'un arbre, en danger d'être surpris à tout moment par les vainqueurs, qui le cherchaient de tous côtés. — p. 218.

I

'T WAS after dread Pultowa's day,
 When fortune left the royal Swede,
 Around a slaughter'd army lay,
 No more to combat and to bleed.
 The power and glory of the war,
 Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
 Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
 And Moscow's walls were safe again,
 Until a day more dark and drear,
 And a more memorable year,
 Should give to slaughter and to shame
 A mightier host and haughtier name;
 A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
 A shock to one — a thunderbolt to all.

II

Such was the hazard of the die;
 The wounded Charles was taught to fly
 By day and night through field and flood,
 Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
 For thousands fell that flight to aid:
 And not a voice was heard t' upbraid
 Ambition in his humbled hour,
 When truth had nought to dread from
 power.

His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
 His own — and died the Russians' slave.
 This too sinks after many a league
 Of well-sustain'd, but vain fatigue;
 And in the depth of forests darkling,
 The watch-fires in the distance sparkling —
 The beacons of surrounding foes —
 A king must lay his limbs at length.
 Are these the laurels and repose
 For which the nations strain their strength?
 They laid him by a savage tree,
 In outworn nature's agony;
 His wounds were stiff, his limbs were
 stark,

The heavy hour was chill and dark;
 The fever in his blood forbade
 A transient slumber's fitful aid.
 And thus it was; but yet through all,
 Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,
 And made, in this extreme of ill,
 His pangs the vassals of his will:
 All silent and subdued were they,
 As once the nations round him lay.

III

A band of chiefs! — alas! how few,
 Since but the fleeting of a day
 Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
 And chivalrous. Upon the clay

Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
 Beside his monarch and his steed,
 For danger levels man and brute,
 And all are fellows in their need.
 Among the rest, Mazeppa made
 His pillow in an old oak's shade —
 Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
 The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold.
 But first, outspent with this long course,
 The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
 And made for him a leafy bed,
 And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,
 And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
 And joy'd to see how well he fed;
 For until now he had the dread
 His wearied courser might refuse
 To browse beneath the midnight dews:
 But he was hardy as his lord,
 And little cared for bed and board;
 But spirited and docile too,
 Whate'er was to be done, would do.
 Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
 All Tartar-like he carried him;
 Obey'd his voice, and came to call,
 And knew him in the midst of all:
 Though thousands were around, — and
 Night,
 Without a star, pursued her flight, —
 That steed from sunset until dawn
 His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
 And laid his lance beneath his oak,
 Felt if his arms in order good
 The long day's march had well withstood —
 If still the powder fill'd the pan,
 And flints unloosen'd kept their lock —
 His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
 And whether they had chafed his belt.
 And next the venerable man,
 From out his havresack and can,
 Prepared and spread his slender stock;
 And to the monarch and his men
 The whole or portion offer'd then
 With far less of inquietude
 Than courtiers at a banquet would.
 And Charles of this his slender share
 With smiles partook a moment there,
 To force of cheer a greater show,
 And seem above both wounds and woe.
 And then he said: 'Of all our band,
 Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
 In skirmish, march, or forage, none
 Can less have said or more have done

Than thee, Mazeppa ! On the earth
 So fit a pair had never birth,
 Since Alexander's days till now,
 As thy Bucephalus and thou.
 All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
 For pricking on o'er flood and field.'
 Mazeppa answer'd, ' Ill betide
 The school wherein I learn'd to ride !'
 Quoth Charles, ' Old Hetman, wherefore so,
 Since thou hast learn'd the art so well ?' 110
 Mazeppa said, 'T were long to tell;
 And we have many a league to go,
 With every now and then a blow,
 And ten to one at least the foe,
 Before our steeds may graze at ease
 Beyond the swift Borysthenes.
 And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
 And I will be the sentinel
 Of this your troop.' — ' But I request,'
 Said Sweden's monarch, ' thou wilt tell 120
 This tale of thine, and I may reap,
 Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
 For at this moment from my eyes
 The hope of present slumber flies.'

' Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
 My seventy years of memory back.
 I think 't was in my twentieth spring, —
 Ay, 't was, — when Casimir was king —
 John Casimir, — I was his page 130
 Six summers, in my earlier age,
 A learned monarch, faith ! was he,
 And most unlike your majesty:
 He made no wars, and did not gain
 New realms to lose them back again;
 And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
 He reign'd in most unseemly quiet.
 Not that he had no cares to vex,
 He loved the muses and the sex;
 And sometimes these so froward are,
 They made him wish himself at war; 140
 But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
 Another mistress, or new book.
 And then he gave prodigious fêtes —
 All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
 To gaze upon his splendid court,
 And dames, and chiefs, of princely port.
 He was the Polish Solomon, —
 So sung his poets, all but one,
 Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
 And boasted that he could not flatter. 150
 It was a court of jousts and mimes,
 Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
 Even I for once produced some verses,
 And sign'd my odes " Despairing Thyrsis."

There was a certain Palatine,
 A count of far and high descent,
 Rich as a salt or silver mine;
 And he was proud, ye may divine,
 As if from heaven he had been sent.
 He had such wealth in blood and ore 160
 As few could match beneath the throne;
 And he would gaze upon his store,
 And o'er his pedigree would pore,
 Until by some confusion led,
 Which almost look'd like want of head,
 He thought their merits were his own.
 His wife was not of his opinion —
 His junior she by thirty years —
 Grew daily tired of his dominion;
 And, after wishes, hopes, and fears, 170
 To virtue a few farewell tears,
 A restless dream or two, some glances
 At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
 Awaited but the usual chances
 (Those happy accidents which render
 The coldest dames so very tender),
 To deck her Count with titles given,
 'T is said, as passports into heaven;
 But, strange to say, they rarely boast
 Of these, who have deserved them most.

V

' I was a goodly stripling then; 180
 At seventy years I so may say,
 That there were few, or boys or men,
 Who, in my dawning time of day,
 Of vassal or of knight's degree,
 Could vie in vanities with me.
 For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
 A port, not like to this ye see,
 But smooth, as all is rugged now;
 For time, and care, and war, have 190
 plough'd
 My very soul from out my brow;
 And thus I should be disavow'd
 By all my kind and kin, could they
 Compare my day and yesterday.
 This change was wrought, too, long ere
 age
 Had ta'en my features for his page:
 With years, ye know, have not declined
 My strength, my courage, or my mind,
 Or at this hour I should not be 200
 Telling old tales beneath a tree,
 With starless skies my canopy.
 But let me on: Theresa's form —
 Methinks it glides before me now,
 Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
 The memory is so quick and warm;

And yet I find no words to tell
 The shape of her I loved so well.
 She had the Asiatic eye,
 Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
 Hath mingled with our Polish blood, 210
 Dark as above us is the sky;
 But through it stole a tender light,
 Like the first moonrise of midnight;
 Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
 Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
 All love, half languor, and half fire,
 Like saints that at the stake expire,
 And lift their raptured looks on high
 As though it were a joy to die; —
 A brow like a midsummer lake, 220
 Transparent with the sun therein,
 When waves no murmur dare to make,
 And heaven beholds her face within; —
 A cheek and lip — but why proceed?
 I loved her then — I love her still;
 And such as I am love indeed
 In fierce extremes — in good and ill.
 But still we love even in our rage,
 And haunted to our very age
 With the vain shadow of the past, 230
 As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI

'We met, we gazed — I saw, and sigh'd;
 She did not speak, and yet replied.
 There are ten thousand tones and signs
 We hear and see, but none defines —
 Involuntary sparks of thought,
 Which strike from out the heart o'er-
 wrought
 And form a strange intelligence
 Alike mysterious and intense,
 Which link the burning chain that binds, 240
 Without their will, young hearts and minds;
 Conveying, as the electric wire,
 We know not how, the absorbing fire.
 I saw, and sigh'd — in silence wept;
 And still reluctant distance kept,
 Until I was made known to her,
 And we might then and there confer
 Without suspicion — then, even then,
 I long'd, and was resolved to speak;
 But on my lips they died again, 250
 The accents tremulous and weak,
 Until one hour. — There is a game,
 A frivolous and foolish play,
 Wherewith we while away the day;
 It is — I have forgot the name —
 And we to this, it seems, were set,
 By some strange chance, which I forgot.

I reckon'd not if I won or lost,
 It was enough for me to be
 So near to hear, and oh! to see 260
 The being whom I loved the most.
 I watch'd her as a sentinel
 (May ours this dark night watch as
 well!),
 Until I saw, and thus it was,
 That she was pensive, nor perceived
 Her occupation, nor was grieved
 Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
 Play'd on for hours, as if her will
 Yet bound her to the place, though not
 That hers might be the winning lot. 270
 Then through my brain the thought did
 pass
 Even as a flash of lightning there,
 That there was something in her air
 Which would not doom me to despair;
 And on the thought my words broke
 forth,
 All incoherent as they were —
 Their eloquence was little worth,
 But yet she listen'd — 't is enough,
 Who listens once will listen twice;
 Her heart, be sure, is not of ice, 280
 And one refusal no rebuff.

VII

'I loved, and was beloved again —
 They tell me, Sire, you never knew
 Those gentle frailties; if 't is true,
 I shorten all my joy or pain;
 To you 't would seem absurd as vain:
 But all men are not born to reign,
 Or o'er their passions, or as you,
 Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
 I am — or rather was — a prince, 290
 A chief of thousands, and could lead
 Them on where each would foremost
 bleed;
 But could not o'er myself evince
 The like control. — But to resume:
 I loved, and was beloved again;
 In sooth, it is a happy doom,
 But yet where happiest ends in pain.
 We met in secret, and the hour
 Which led me to that lady's bower
 Was fiery Expectation's dower. 300
 My days and nights were nothing, all
 Except that hour which doth recall
 In the long lapse from youth to age
 No other like itself — I'd give
 The Ukraine back again to live
 It o'er once more; and be a page,

The happy page, who was the lord
 Of one soft heart and his own sword,
 And had no other gem nor wealth
 Save nature's gift of youth and health. 310
 We met in secret — doubly sweet,
 Some say, they find it so to meet;
 I know not that — I would have given
 My life but to have call'd her mine
 In the full view of earth and heaven;
 For I did oft and long repine
 That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII

'For lovers there are many eyes,
 And such there were on us; the devil
 On such occasions should be civil; 320
 The devil! — I'm loth to do him wrong,
 It might be some untoward saint,
 Who would not be at rest too long
 But to his pious bile gave vent —
 But one fair night, some lurking spies
 Surprised and seized us both.
 The Count was something more than
 wrath;

I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
 All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
 What 'gainst their numbers could I do? —
 'T was near his castle, far away 331
 From city or from succour near,
 And almost on the break of day.
 I did not think to see another,

My moments seem'd reduced to few;
 And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
 And, it may be, a saint or two,
 As I resign'd me to my fate,
 They led me to the castle gate:

Theresa's doom I never knew, 340
 Our lot was henceforth separate.
 An angry man, ye may opine,
 Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
 And he had reason good to be,

But he was most enraged lest such
 An accident should chance to touch
 Upon his future pedigree;
 Nor less amazed, that such a blot
 His noble 'scutcheon should have got, 350
 While he was highest of his line;
 Because unto himself he seem'd

The first of men, nor less he deem'd
 In others' eyes, and most in mine.
 'Sdeath! with a page — perchance a
 king

Had reconciled him to the thing;
 But with a stripling of a page!
 I felt — but cannot paint his rage.

IX

"Bring forth the horse!" — the horse was
 brought;

In truth, he was a noble steed,
 A Tartar of the Ukraine breed, 360
 Who look'd as though the speed of thought
 Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
 Wild as the wild deer, and untought,
 With spur and bridle undefiled —

'T was but a day he had been caught
 And smorting, with erected mane,
 And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
 In the full foam of wrath and dread
 To me the desert-born was led.
 They bound me on, that menial throng, 370
 Upon his back with many a thong;
 Then loosed him with a sudden lash:
 Away! — away! — and on we dash! —
 Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X

'Away! — away! — My breath was gone —
 I saw not where he hurried on:

'T was scarcely yet the break of day,
 And on he foam'd — away! — away!
 The last of human sounds which rose,
 As I was darted from my foes, 380
 Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
 Which on the wind came roaring after
 A moment from that rabble rout.
 With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,

And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
 Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
 And, writhing half my form about,
 Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the
 tread,

The thunder of my courser's speed,
 Perchance they did not hear nor heed: 390
 It vexes me, for I would fain
 Have paid their insult back again.
 I paid it well in after days.

There is not of that castle gate,
 Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
 Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
 Nor of its fields a blade of grass,

Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
 Where stood the hearth-stone of the
 hall;

And many a time ye there might pass, 400
 Nor dream that e'er that fortress was.

I saw its turrets in a blaze,
 Their crackling battlements all cleft,
 And the hot lead pour down like rain
 From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
 Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.

They little thought that day of pain,
 When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
 They bade me to destruction dash,
 That one day I should come again, 410
 With twice five thousand horse, to thank
 The Count for his uncourteous ride.
 They play'd me then a bitter prank,
 When, with the wild horse for my guide,
 They bound me to his foaming flank.
 At length I play'd them one as frank —
 For time at last sets all things even —
 And if we do but watch the hour,
 There never yet was human power
 Which could evade, if unforgiven, 420
 The patient search and vigil long
 Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI

' Away, away, my steed and I,
 Upon the pinions of the wind,
 All human dwellings left behind;
 We sped like meteors through the sky,
 When with its crackling sound the night
 Is chequer'd with the northern light.
 Town — village — none were on our track,
 But a wild plain of far extent, 430
 And bounded by a forest black;
 And, save the scarce seen battlement
 On distant heights of some strong hold,
 Against the Tartars built of old,
 No trace of man: the year before
 A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
 And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
 The verdure flies the bloody sod.
 The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
 And a low breeze crept moaning by — 440
 I could have answer'd with a sigh;
 But fast we fled, away, away —
 And I could neither sigh nor pray;
 And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
 Upon the courser's bristling mane.
 But, smorting still with rage and fear,
 He flew upon his far career:
 At times I almost thought, indeed,
 He must have slacken'd in his speed;
 But no — my bound and slender frame 450
 Was nothing to his angry might,
 And merely like a spur became.
 Each motion which I made to free
 My swoln limbs from their agony
 Increased his fury and affright:
 I tried my voice, — 't was faint and low,
 But yet he swerved as from a blow;
 And, starting to each accent, sprang
 As from a sudden trumpet's clang. 459

Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
 Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
 And in my tongue the thirst became
 A something fierier far than flame.

XII

' We near'd the wild wood: 't was so
 wide,
 I saw no bounds on either side;
 'T was studded with old sturdy trees,
 That bent not to the roughest breeze
 Which howls down from Siberia's waste
 And strips the forest in its haste;
 But these were few and far between, 470
 Set thick with shrubs more young and
 green,
 Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
 Ere strown by those autumnal eves
 That nip the forest's foliage dead,
 Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
 Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
 Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
 And some long winter's night hath shed
 Its frost o'er every tombless head,
 So cold and stark the raven's beak 480
 May peck unpierced each frozen cheek.
 'T was a wild waste of underwood,
 And here and there a chestnut stood,
 The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
 But far apart — and well it were,
 Or else a different lot were mine:
 The boughs gave way, and did not tear
 My limbs; and I found strength to bear
 My wounds already scarr'd with cold —
 My bonds forbade to loose my hold. 490
 We rustled through the leaves like wind,
 Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves be-
 hind;
 By night I heard them on the track,
 Their troop came hard upon our back,
 With their long gallop which can tire
 The hound's deep hate and hunter's fire.
 Where'er we flew they follow'd on,
 Nor left us with the morning sun;
 Behind I saw them, scarce a rood, 499
 At day-break winding through the wood,
 And through the night had heard their
 feet
 Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
 Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
 At least to die amidst the horde,
 And perish — if it must be so —
 At bay, destroying many a foe.
 When first my courser's race begun,
 I wish'd the goal already won;

But now I doubted strength and speed.
 Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed 510
 Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
 Nor faster falls the blinding snow
 Which whelms the peasant near the door
 Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
 Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
 Than through the forest-paths he past —
 Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
 All furious as a favour'd child
 Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still,
 A woman piqued who has her will. 520

XIII

'The wood was past; 't was more than
 noon,

But chill the air although in June;
 Or it might be my veins ran cold —
 Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
 And I was then not what I seem,
 But headlong as a wintry stream,
 And wore my feelings out before .
 I well could count their causes o'er.
 And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
 The tortures which beset my path, 530
 Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
 Thus bound in nature's nakedness
 (Sprung from a race whose rising blood
 When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
 And trodden hard upon, is like
 The rattle-snake's in act to strike),
 What marvel if this worn-out trunk
 Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
 The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
 I seem'd to sink upon the ground; 540
 But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
 My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
 And throb'd awhile, then beat no more:
 The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
 I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
 And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
 Which saw no farther: he who dies
 Can die no more than then I died.
 O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
 I felt the blackness come and go, 550

And strove to wake; but could not make
 My senses climb up from below.
 I felt as on a plank at sea,
 When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
 At the same time upheave and whelm,
 And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
 My undulating life was as
 The fancied lights that flitting pass
 Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
 Fever begins upon the brain; 560

But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
 But a confusion worse than such:
 I own that I should deem it much,
 Dying, to feel the same again;
 And yet I do suppose we must
 Feel far more ere we turn to dust.
 No matter; I have bared my brow
 Full in Death's face — before — and now.

XIV

'My thoughts came back; where was I?
 Cold,

And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
 Life reassumed its lingering hold, 571
 And throb by throb: till grown a pang
 Which for a moment would convulse,
 My blood reflow'd though thick and chill;
 My ear with uncouth noises rang,
 My heart began once more to thrill;
 My sight return'd, though dim, alas!
 And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
 Methought the dash of waves was nigh:
 There was a gleam too of the sky, 580
 Studded with stars; — it is no dream;
 The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
 The bright broad river's gushing tide
 Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
 And we are half-way, struggling o'er
 To yon unknown and silent shore.
 The waters broke my hollow trance,
 And with a temporary strength

My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
 My courser's broad breast proudly braves
 And dashes off the ascending waves, 591
 And onward we advance!
 We reach the slippery shore at length,
 A haven I but little prized,
 For all behind was dark and drear,
 And all before was night and fear.
 How many hours of night or day
 In those suspended pangs I lay,
 I could not tell; I scarcely knew
 If this were human breath I drew. 600

XV

'With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
 And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
 The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
 Up the repelling bank.
 We gain the top: a boundless plain
 Spreads through the shadow of the night,
 And onward, onward, onward, seems,
 Like precipices in our dreams,
 To stretch beyond the sight;
 And here and there a speck of white, 610

Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right.

But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes: 620

That very cheat had cheer'd me then !
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI

' Onward we went — but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour; 630

But useless all to me,
His new-born tameness nought avail'd —
My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
Perchance, had they been free.

With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,
But still it was in vain;

My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolong'd their pain. 640

The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming sun —
How slow, alas, he came !

Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day;
How heavily it roll'd away —
Before the eastern flame

Rose crimson, and deposed the stars, 649
And call'd the radiance from their cars,
And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII

' Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around — behind — before;
What boot'd it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river ? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel, none of toil; 660
The very air was mute;

And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were — or seem'd — alone.
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh
From out yon tuft of blackening firs. 670
Is it the wind those branches stirs ?
No, no ! from out the forest prance

A trampling troop; I see them come !
In one vast squadron they advance !

I strove to cry — my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide ?
A thousand horse — and none to ride !
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils never stretch'd by pain, 680
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,

Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet.
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh, 690
He answer'd, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable —

His first and last career is done !
On came the troop — they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong.

They stop — they start — they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there, 699
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,

Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide.
They snort — they foam — neigh — swerve
aside,

And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.

They left me there to my despair, 709
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me — and there we lay
The dying on the dead !

I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.

'And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see 720
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,
That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years
Presents the worst and last of fears
Inevitable — even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon;
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare

That prudence might escape: 730
At times both wish'd for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,
And welcome in no shape.

And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer oft than he 740
Whose heritage was misery:
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,

Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued),

With nought perhaps to grieve: —
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distemper'd eyes, 750
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.

To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save — 761
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII

'The sun was sinking — still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death had need,
No hope arose of being freed.

I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly, 770
Who scarce would wait till both should die
Ere his repast begun.
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lack'd the
strength;

But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice, 780
Together scared him off at length —

I know no more — my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath, 790
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my
brain —

A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX

'I woke — Where was I? — Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie? 800
And is it mortal, yon bright eye
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall:
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
Even with my first return of thought;
For ever and anon she threw 810

A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free.
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be;
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast.
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,

She smiled — and I essay'd to speak,
But fail'd — and she approach'd, and
made 830

With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free.
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers — ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music follow'd her light feet. 830

But those she call'd were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
Another look on me she cast,

Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return: — while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.

XX

'She came with mother and with sire — 840
What need of more? — I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain,

They bore me to the nearest hut,
They brought me into life again,
Me — one day o'er their realm to reign!

Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness, 850
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne, —

What mortal his own doom may guess?
Let none despond, let none despair!

To-morrow the Borysthene
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank, — and never
Had I such welcome for a river

As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night!' — The Hetman
threw 860

His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:

His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, he wonder'd not, —
The king had been an hour asleep.

PROMETHEUS

[Publ. 1816]

TITAN! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe, 90
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoes.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate, 90
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refused thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift eternity
Was thine — And thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell; 90
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy, 90
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not con-
vulse,

A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;

And Man in portions can foresee
 His own funereal destiny, ⁵⁰
 His wretchedness, and his resistance,
 And his sad unallied existence:
 To which his Spirit may oppose
 Itself — and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,
 Which even in torture can descry
 Its own concentr'd recompense,
 Triumphant where it dares defy,
 And making Death a Victory.

BEPPO

A VENETIAN STORY

[Publ. 1817]

'*Rosalind*. Farewell, Monsieur Traveller:
 Look, you lisp, and wear strange suits: dis-
 able all the benefits of your own country; be
 out of love with your Nativity, and almost
 chide God for making you that countenance
 you are; or I will scarce think you have swam
 in a *Gondola*.'

As You Like It, Act IV. Scene 1.

Annotation of the Commentators.

'That is, been at *Venice*, which was much
 visited by the young English gentlemen of those
 times, and was then what *Paris* is now, — the
 seat of all dissoluteness.'

S. A. [Samuel Ayscough.]

I

'T is known, at least it should be, that
 throughout

All countries of the Catholic persua-
 sion,
 Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes
 about,

The people take their fill of recreation,
 And buy repentance, ere they grow de-
 vout,

However high their rank or low their
 station,
 With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking,
 masquing,
 And other things which may be had for
 asking.

II

The moment night with dusky mantle
 covers

The skies (and the more duskily the
 better), ¹⁰

The time less liked by husbands than by
 lovers

Begins, and prudery flings aside her fet-
 ter;

And gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
 Giggling with all the gallants who beset
 her;

And there are songs and quavers, roaring,
 humming,

Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

III

And there are dresses splendid, but fantasti-
 cal,

Masks of all times and nations, Turks
 and Jews,

And harlequins and clowns, with feats gym-
 nastical,

Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and
 Hindoos; ²⁰

All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical
 All people, as their fancies hit, may
 choose,

But no one in these parts may quiz the
 clergy, —

Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I
 charge ye.

IV

You'd better walk about begirt with briars,
 Instead of coat and smallclothes, than
 put on

A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
 Although you swore it only was in fun;
 They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the
 fires

Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
 Nor say one mass to cool the caldron's
 bubble ³⁰

That boil'd your bones, unless you paid them
 double.

V

But saving this, you may put on what'er
 You like by way of doublet, cape, or
 cloak,

Such as in Monmouth-street, or in Reg
 Fair,

Would rig you out in seriousness or joke;
 And even in Italy such places are,

With prettier name in softer accents
 spoke,

For, hating Covent Garden, I can hit on
 No place that's call'd '*Piazza*' in Great
 Britain. ⁴⁰

VI

This feast is named the Carnival, which
being
Interpreted, implies 'farewell to flesh:'
So call'd, because, the name and thing
agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt
and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much glee
in,
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'T is as we take a glass with friends at
parting,
In the stage-coach or packet, just at start-
ing.

VII

And thus they bid farewell to carnal dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced ra-
gouts,
To live for forty days on ill-dress'd fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their
stews,
A thing which causes many 'poohs' and
'pishes,'
And several oaths (which would not suit
the Muse),
From travellers accusom'd from a boy
To eat their salmon, at the least, with soy.

VIII

And therefore humbly I would recommend
'The curious in fish-sauce,' before they
cross
The sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in
gross
(Or if set out beforehand, these may send
By any means least liable to loss),
Ketchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well-nigh
starve ye;

IX

That is to say, if your religion's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans
do,
According to the proverb, — although no
man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast; and you,
If Protestant, or sickly, or a woman;
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout —
Dine and be d—d! I don't mean to be
coarse,
But that's the penalty, to say no worse.

X

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And masque, and mime, and mystery, and
more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore, —
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

XI

They've pretty faces yet, those same Vene-
tians,
Black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet ex-
pressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the
Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimick'd ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best's at Florence — see it, if ye
will),
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione,

XII

Whose tints are truth and beauty at their
best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'T is but a portrait of his son, and wife,
And self; but *such* a woman! love in life!

XIII

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet model must have been
the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or
steal,
Wer't not impossible, besides a shame.
Tho' face recalls some face, as 't were with
pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

XIV

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young and fix our eyes on every
face;
And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,

The youth, the bloom, the beauty which agree,

In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor
shall know, ¹¹¹
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they are,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For beauty's sometimes best set off
afar),

And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the
bar;

And, truth to say, they're mostly very
pretty,
And rather like to show it, more 's the pity!

XVI

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs, ¹²¹
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a
letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mer-
curies

Who do such things because they know
no better;
And then, God knows what mischief may
arise

When love links two young people in
one fetter,

Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows and hearts and
heads.

XVII

Shakspeare described the sex in Desde-
mona

As very fair, but yet suspect in fame, ¹³⁰
And to this day from Venice to Verona

Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never
known a

Husband whom mere suspicion could in-
flame

To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a 'cavalier servente.'

XVIII

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)

Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's

Which smothers women in a bed of
feather, ¹⁴⁰

But worthier of these much more jolly
fellows;

When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear

You should not, I'll describe it you ex-
actly:

'Tis a long cover'd boat that's common
here,

Carved at the prow, built lightly, but
compactly;

Row'd by two rowers, each call'd 'Gondo-
lier,'

It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe, ¹⁵¹
Where none can make out what you say
or do.

XX

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,

By night and day, all paces, swift or slow;
And round the theatres, a sable throng,

They wait in their dusk livery of woe, —
But not to them do woful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral's
done. ¹⁶⁰

XXI

But to my story. — 'T was some years
ago,

It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The carnival was at its height, and so

Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,

Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease.

XXII

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a 'certain

age,' ¹⁷⁰

Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage

A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or
tears,

To name, define by speech, or write on
page,

The period meant precisely by that word, —
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

XXIII

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
Of time, and time return'd the compliment
And treated her genteelly, so that, dress'd,
She look'd extremely well where'er she went; 180
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
Indeed she shone all smiles, and seem'd to flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her.

XXIV

She was a married woman; 't is convenient,
Because in Christian countries 't is a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more lenient;
Whereas if single ladies play the fool
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool), 190
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

XXV

Her husband sail'd upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other seas,
And when he lay in quarantine for pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her highest attic,
For thence she could discern the ship with ease:
He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe, call'd more briefly,
Beppo. 200

XXVI

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though colour'd, as it were, within a tan-yard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour —
A better seaman never yet did man yard:
And she, although her manners show'd no rigour,
Was deem'd a woman of the strictest principle,
So much as to be thought almost invincible.

XXVII

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost, and some 210
That he had somehow blunder'd into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering home:
And there were several offer'd any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not come,
For most men (till by losing render'd sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII

'T is said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite prophetic
That they should never more each other see 220
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or three),
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee,
He left this Adriatic Ariadne.

XXIX

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might;
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease alone at night;
She deem'd the window-frames and shutters brittle
Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,
And so she thought it prudent to connect her 231
With a vice-husband, chiefly to protect her.

XXX

She chose (and what is there they will not choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?),
Till Beppo should return from his long cruise
And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,
A man some women like, and yet abuse —
A coxcomb was he by the public voice;
A Count of wealth, they said, as well as quality,
And in his pleasures of great liberality. 240

XXXI

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
 Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and
 Tuscan;
 The last not easy, be it known to you,
 For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
 He was a critic upon operas, too,
 And knew all niceties of the sock and
 buskin;
 And no Venetian audience could endure a
 Song, scene, or air, when he cried 'seccatura !

XXXII

His 'bravo' was decisive, for that sound
 Hush'd 'Academie' sigh'd in silent awe;
 The fiddlers trembled as he look'd around,
 For fear of some false note's detected
 flaw. ²⁵²
 The 'prima donna's' tuneful heart would
 bound,
 Dreading the deep damnation of his
 'bah !'
 Soprano, basso, even the contra-alto,
 Wish'd him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII

He patronised the Improvisatori,
 Nay, could himself extemporise some
 stanzas,
 Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a
 story,
 Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance
 as ²⁶⁰
 Italians can be, though in this their glory
 Must surely yield the palm to that which
 France has;
 In short, he was a perfect cavaliero,
 And to his very valet seem'd a hero.

XXXIV

Then he was faithful, too, as well as
 amorous,
 So that no sort of female could com-
 plain,
 Although they're now and then a little
 clamorous;
 He never put the pretty souls in pain;
 His heart was one of those which most
 enamour us,
 Wax to receive, and marble to retain. ²⁷⁰
 He was a lover of the good old school,
 Who still become more constant as they
 cool.

XXXV

No wonder such accomplishments should
 turn
 A female head, however sage and steady,
 With scarce a hope that Beppo could re-
 turn, —
 In law he was almost as good as dead, he
 Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least
 concern,
 And she had waited several years al-
 ready;
 And really if a man won't let us know ²⁷⁹
 That he's alive, he's *dead*, or should be so.

XXXVI

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman
 (Although, God knows, it is a grievous
 sin),
 'Tis, I may say, permitted to have two
 men;
 I can't tell who first brought the custom
 in,
 But 'a Cavalier Serventes' are quite com-
 mon,
 And no one notices, nor cares a pin;
 And we may call this (not to say the worst)
 A second marriage which corrupts the *first*.

XXXVII

The word was formerly a 'Cicisbeo,'
 But *that* is now grown vulgar and inde-
 cent; ²⁸⁰
 The Spaniards call the person a 'Cortejo,'
 For the same mode subsists in Spain,
 though recent;
 In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,
 And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea
 sent.
 But Heaven preserve Old England from
 such courses !
 Or what becomes of damage and divorces ?

XXXVIII

However, I still think, with all due defer-
 ence
 To the fair *single* part of the Creation,
 That married ladies should preserve the
 preference ²⁸⁹
 In *ête-à-ête* or general conversation —
 And this I say without peculiar reference
 To England, France, or any other na-
 tion —
 Because they know the world, and are at
 ease,
 And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX

'T is true, your budding Miss is very charming,
 But shy and awkward at first coming out,
 So much alarm'd that she is quite alarming,
 All Giggle, Blush; half Pertness and half Pout;
 And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there's harm in
 What you, she, it, or they, may be about,
 The Nursery still lips out in all they utter —
 Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL

But 'Cavalier Servente' is the phrase
 Used in politest circles to express
 This supernumerary slave, who stays
 Close to the lady as a part of dress,
 Her word the only law which he obeys.
 His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
 Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
 And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XLI

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
 That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
 Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
 And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
 Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play
 Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
 When the first act is ended by a dance
 In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
 Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
 My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
 Because the skies are not the most secure;
 I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route
 Where the green alleys windingly allure,
 Reeling with *grapes* red wagons choke the way, —
 In England 't would be dung, dust, or a dry.

XLIII

I also like to dine on becaficas,
 To see the Sun set, sure he 'll rise to-morrow,
 Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
 A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
 But with all Heaven t' himself; that day will break as
 Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
 That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
 Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

XLIV

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
 Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
 And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
 With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
 And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in
 That not a single accent seems uncouth,
 Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
 Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
 From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
 And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
 Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
 To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
 But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
 Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
 Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI

Eve of the land which still is Paradise !
 Italian beauty ! didst thou not inspire
 Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
 With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
 In what he hath bequeath'd us ? — in what guise,
 Though flashing from the fervour of the lyre,

Would words describe thy past and present
glow,
While yet Canova can create below ?

XLVII

'England ! with all thy faults I love thee
still,'

I said at Calais and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill; ³⁷¹
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;

I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've
got it);

I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 't is not too late;

XLVIII

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;

I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer; ³⁸⁰
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,

'That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and
King !

Which means that I like all and every
thing.

XLIX

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's
debt,

Our little riots just to show we're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,

All these I can forgive, and those for-
get, ³⁹⁰

And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L

But to my tale of Laura, — for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,

And, therefore, may the reader too dis-
please —

The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard. ⁴⁰⁰

LI

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading ! could I
scale

Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world de-
lighting)

A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western senti-
mentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

LII

But I am but a nameless sort of person
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels),
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling
verse on, ⁴¹¹

The first that Walker's Lexicon un-
ravel,

And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion — so here goes.

LIII

The Count and Laura made their new ar-
rangement,

Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes
do,

For half a dozen years without estrange-
ment;

They had their little differences, too; ⁴²⁰
Those jealous whiffs, which never any
change meant:

In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of
squabble,

From sinners of high station to the rabble.

LIV

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make
them;

The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 't was not worth
while to break them:

The world beheld them with indulgent air;
The pious only wish'd 'the devil take
them !' ⁴³⁰

He took them not ; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones'
baits.

LV

But they were young: Oh ! what without
our youth

Would love be ! What would youth be
without love !

Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigour,
truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from
above;
But, languishing with years, it grows un-
couth —
One of few things experience don't im-
prove,
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old
fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous. 440

LVI

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind's made up
to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
Spectator or partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the
cases
Is — *here*, we have six weeks of 'varnish'd
faces.'

LVII

Laura, when dress'd, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen, 450
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month
wore,
Colour'd, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts
of dress.

LVIII

They went to the Ridotto; — 't is a hall
Where people dance, and sup, and dance
again;
Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued
ball, 459
But that's of no importance to my strain;
'T is (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain:
The company is 'mix'd' (the phrase I
quote is
As much as saying, they're below your
notice);

LIX

For a 'mix'd company' implies that, save
Yourself and friends and half a hundred
more

Whom you may bow to without looking
grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, call'd *'the World'*;
but I, 471
Although I know them, really don't know
why.

LX

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators: — how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost 479
By love, or war, and now and then by frost!

LXI

Crush'd was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knock'd his army down with icy
hammer,
Stopp'd by the *elements*, like a whaler, or
A blundering novice in his new French
grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of
war,
And as for Fortune — but I dare not d —
her,
Because, were I to ponder to infinity,
The more I should believe in her divinity.

LXII

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and
marriage; 490
I cannot say that she's done much for me
yet;
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We've not yet closed accounts, and we shall
see yet
How much she'll make amends for past
miscarriage;
Meantime the goddess I'll no more impor-
tune,
Unless to thank her when she's made my
fortune.

LXIII

To turn, — and to return; — the devil take
it!
This story slips for ever through my
fingers,

Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be — and so it rather
lingers; ⁵⁰⁰

This form of verse began, I can't well break
it,

But must keep time and tune like public
singers;

But if I once get through my present mea-
sure,

I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.

LXIV

They went to the Ridotto ('t is a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,

Because I'm rather hippish, and may
borrow

Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my
sorrow ⁵¹⁰

Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or
find,

Something shall leave it half an hour be-
hind).

LXV

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her
lips;

To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she
dips,

Complains of warmth, and, this complaint
avow'd,

Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities
still

Her dearest friends for being dress'd so ill.

LXVI

One has false curls, another too much
paint, ⁵²¹

A third — where did she buy that fright-
ful turban?

A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to
faint,

A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and
suburban,

A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be
her bane,

And lo! an eighth appears, — 'I'll see no
more!

For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a
score.

LXVII

Meantime, while she was thus at other
gazing,

Others were levelling their looks at her;
She heard the men's half-whisper'd mode
of praising, ⁵³¹

And, till 't was done, determined not to
stir;

The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were
Admirers still, — but men are so debased,
Those brazen creatures always suit their
taste.

LXVIII

For my part, now, I ne'er could under-
stand

Why naughty women — but I won't dis-
cuss

A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band, ⁵⁴¹

Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and
Romilly

Should quote in their next speeches from
my homily.

LXIX

While Laura thus was seen and seeing,
smiling,

Talking, she knew not why and cared not
what,

So that her female friends, with envy broil-
ing,

Beheld her airs and triumph, and all that;
And well dress'd males still kept before her
filing,

And passing bow'd and mingled with her
chat; ⁵⁵⁰

More than the rest one person seem'd to
stare

With pertinacity that's rather rare.

LXX

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;

And Laura saw him, and at first was
glad,

Because the Turks so much admire phi-
logyny,

Although their usage of their wives is
sad;

'T is said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman whom they purchase like a
pad:

They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines 'ad libitum.' 560

LXXI

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,

They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with northern nations;

Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely:

And as the Turks abhor long conversations,

Their days are either pass'd in doing nothing,

Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;

Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse; 570

Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, —

In harams learning soon would make a pretty schism!

But luckily these beauties are no 'Blues,'
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em

'That charming passage in the last new poem, —

LXXIII

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,

And getting but a nibble at a time, 579
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same

Small 'Triton of the minnows,' the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,

The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards — in short, a

fool, —

LXXIV

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving 'Good!' (by no means

GOOD in law),
Humming like flies around the newest blase,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,

Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,

Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by

letter, 591
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

LXXV

One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows

In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,

One don't know what to say to them, or think,

Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink

Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight

taper. 600

LXXVI

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world

like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better

brothers,
Who think of something else besides the

pen;
But for the children of the 'mighty mother's,'

The would-be wits and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily 'tea is ready,'

Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXVII

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention

Have none of these instructive pleasant people, 610

And *one* to them would seem a new invention,

Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;

I think 't would almost be worth while to pension

(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)

A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII

No chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,

No circulating library amasses

Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures 620

Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,

Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematica.

LXXIX

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,

I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,

And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,

I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;

I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows 630

Inclines us more to laugh than scold,
though laughter

Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!

Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays

His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,

I love you both, and both shall have my praise:

Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy!—
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

LXXXI

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her, 641

Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,

Which seems to say, 'Madam, I do you honour,

And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay:'

Could staring win a woman, this had won her,

But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle

Even at this stranger's most outlandish ogle.

LXXXII

The morning now was on the point of breaking,

A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking 651

In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The ball-room ere the sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,

His blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,

And stay'd them over for some silly reason,

And then I look'd (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season; 660

And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,

Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,

I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the dawn.

LXXXIV

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was naught to me

More than that patent work of God's invention,

A charming woman whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,

Yet if you like to find out this fair she,
At the next London or Parisian ball 671
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV

Laura, who knew it would not do at all

To meet the daylight after seven hours sitting

Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;

The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,

When lo! those curs'd gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they should not.

LXXXVI

In this they're like our coachmen, and the
cause 68:
Is much the same — the crowd, and pull-
ing, hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their
jaws,
They make a never intermitting bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gemmen keep the
laws,
And here a sentry stands within your
calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or
bearing.

LXXXVII

The Count and Laura found their boat at
last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent
tide, 69:
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The dancers and their dresses, too, be-
side;
Some little scandals eke: but all aghast
(As to their palace stairs the rowers
glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer,
When lo! the Mussulman was there before
her.

LXXXVIII

'Sir,' said the Count, with brow exceed-
ing grave,
'Your unexpected presence here will
make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import? But perhaps 't is a mistake;
I hope it is so; and, at once to wave 70:
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake;
You understand my meaning, or you *shall*.'
'Sir' (quoth the Turk), 't is no mistake
at all.

LXXXIX

'That lady is my wife!' Much wonder
paints
The lady's changing cheek, as well it
might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes
faints,
Italian females don't do so outright;
They only call a little on their saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or
quite; 71:

Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and
sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC

She said, — what could she say? Why,
not a word:
But the Count courteously invited in
The stranger, much appeased by what he
heard:
'Such things, perhaps, we'd best discuss
within,'
Said he; 'don't let us make ourselves ab-
surd
In public by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole trans-
action.' 72:

XCI

They enter'd and for coffee call'd — it
came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians
both,
Although the way they make it's not the
same.
Now Laura, much recover'd, or less loth
To speak, cries 'Beppo! what's your pagan
name?
Bless me! your beard is of amazing
growth!
And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 't was very wrong?

XCII

'And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?
With any other women did you wive? 73:
Is 't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest shawl — as I'm
alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no
pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To — bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your
liver?

XCIII

'Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you
not;
It shall be shaved before you're a day
older:
Why do you wear it? Oh, I had forgot —
Pray don't you think the weather here is
colder? 74:

How do I look? You shan't stir from this spot

In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder

Should find you out, and make the story known.

How short your hair is! Lord, how grey it's grown!

XCIV

What answer Beppo made to these demands

Is more than I know. He was cast away About where Troy stood once, and nothing stands;

Became a slave of course, and for his pay

Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,

He join'd the rogues and prosper'd and became

A renegade of indifferent fame. 75

XCV

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so

Keen the desire to see his home again, He thought himself in duty bound to do so,

And not be always thieving on the main; Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,

And so he hired a vessel come from Spain, Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,

Mann'd with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco. 76

XCVI

Himself, and much (heaven knows how gotten!) cash

He then embark'd with risk of life and limb,

And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;

He said that *Providence* protected him — For my part, I say nothing, lest we clash

In our opinions:—well, the ship was trim,

Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on, Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.

XCVII

They reach'd the island, he transferr'd his lading

And self and live-stock to another bottom, 77

And pass'd for a true Turkey-merchant, trading

With goods of various names, but I forgot 'em.

However, he got off by this evading, Or else the people would perhaps have

shot him; And thus at Venice landed to reclaim

His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

XCVIII

His wife received, the patriarch re-baptized him

(He made the church a present, by the way);

He then threw off the garments which disguised him,

And borrow'd the Count's smallclothes for a day: 78

His friends the more for his long absence prized him,

Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,

With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,

For stories — but I don't believe the half of them.

XCIX

Whate'er his youth had suffer'd, his old age With wealth and talking make him some

amends; Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,

I've heard the Count and he were always friends.

My pen is at the bottom of a page, 79

Which being finish'd, here the story ends; 'Tis to be wish'd it had been sooner done,

But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

DON JUAN

[Publ. 1818 ff.]

CANTO III. LXXXVI

SONG

THE ISLES OF GREECE

I

THE isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece! Where burning Sappho loved and sung,

Where grew the arts of war and peace, 80
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!

Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.' 700

3

The mountains look on Marathon —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations; — all were his! 710
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race, 720
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

7

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ! 730

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead

Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!'
'T is but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain — in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine! 740
Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchana! —

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like
these! 750
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind. 760

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells; 770
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
 I see their glorious black eyes shine;
 But gazing on each glowing maid,
 My own the burning tear-drop laves,
 To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep, 779
 Where nothing, save the waves and I,
 May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
 There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
 A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
 Dash down your cup of Samian wine!

CANTO III. CI-CVIII

AVE MARIA

CI

T' our tale. — The feast was over, the
 slaves gone,
 The dwarfs and dancing girls had all re-
 tired;
 The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
 And every sound of revelry expired; 900
 The lady and her lover, left alone,
 The rosy flood of twilight's sky ad-
 mired; —
 Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
 That heavenliest hour of Heaven is wor-
 thiest thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
 The time, the clime, the spot, where I
 so oft
 Have felt that moment in its fullest power
 Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and
 soft,
 While swung the deep bell in the distant
 tower,
 Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
 And not a breath crept through the rosy
 air, 911
 And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd
 with prayer.

CIII

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
 Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of love!
 Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
 Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!

Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
 Those downcast eyes beneath the Al-
 mighty dove —
 What though 't is but a pictured image? —
 strike —
 That painting is no idol, — 't is too like. 922

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
 In nameless print — that I have no devo-
 tion;
 But set those persons down with me to
 pray,
 And you shall see who has the properest
 notion
 Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
 My altars are the mountains and the
 ocean,
 Earth, air, stars, — all that springs from
 the great Whole,
 Who hath produced, and will receive the
 soul.

CV

Sweet hour of twilight! — in the solitude
 Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
 Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave
 flow'd o'er, 932
 To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
 Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
 And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to
 me,
 How have I loved the twilight hour and
 thee!

CVI

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless
 song,
 Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and
 mine,
 And vesper bell's that rose the boughs
 along; 940
 The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
 His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the
 fair throng
 Which learn'd from this example not to fly
 From a true lover, — shadow'd my mind's
 eye.

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good
 things —
 Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,

To the young bird the parent's brooding
wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd
steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone
clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of
dear, 950
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
'Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's
breast.

CVIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts
the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first
day
When they from their sweet friends are
torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something
mourns! 960

CANTO IV. XII-LXXIII

THE DEATH OF HAIDÉE

XII

'Whom the gods love die young,' was said
of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays
even more — 91
The death of friendship, love, youth, all
that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent
shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early
grave
Which men weep over may be meant to
save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead —
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd
made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that
he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to
condemn: 100

Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a
gem,
And knew such brightness was but the re-
flection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than
words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too
much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords; 110
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem
absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or
ne'er heard, —

XV

All these were theirs, for they were chil-
dren still,
And children still they should have ever
been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her beloved, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on
flowers,
And never know the weight of human
hours. 120

XVI

Moons changing had roll'd on, and change-
less found
Those their bright rise had lighted to
such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their
round;
And these were not of the vain kind
which cloy,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which de-
stroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more en-
dear'd.

XVII

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
But theirs was love in which the mind
delights 130

To lose itself when the old world grows
dull,
And we are sick of its lack sounds and
sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one
strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a
wh—re.

XVIII

Hard words ; harsh truth ; a truth which
many know.

Enough.—The faithful and the fairy
pair,

Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt
from care ? 140

Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them
were

Inherent — what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it fran-
tic.

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and
reading,

But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts
bleeding,

For Haidée's knowledge was by no means
great,

And Juan was a boy of saintly breed-
ing ; 150

So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or
doves.

XX

They gazed upon the sunset ; 't is an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their* eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the
power

Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from
such skies,

When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's
ties ;

Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd
that brought

The past still welcome as the present
thought. 160

XXI

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor
came,

And swept, as 't were, across their hearts'
delight,

Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a
flame,

When one is shook in sound, and one in
sight ;

And thus some boding flash'd through
either frame,

And called from Juan's breast a faint low
sigh,

While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

XXII

That large black prophet eye seem'd to
dilate

And follow far the disappearing sun, 170
As if their last day of a happy date

With his broad, bright, and dropping orb
were gone ;

Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate —

He felt a grief, but knowing cause for
none,

His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

XXIII

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that
sort

Which makes not others smile ; then
turn'd aside :

Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
And master'd by her wisdom or her

pride ; 180

When Juan spoke, too — it might be in
sport —

Of this their mutual feeling, she re-
plied —

'If it should be so, — but — it cannot be —
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

XXIV

Juan would question further, but she
press'd

His lip to hers, and silenced him with
this,

And then dismiss'd the omen from her
breast,

Defying augury with that fond kiss ;

And no doubt of all methods 't is the best:

Some people prefer wine — 't is not
amiss ; 190

I have tried both; so those who would a
part take
May choose between the headache and the
heartache.

XXV

One of the two, according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you 'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly
know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons
show,
And then decide, without great wrong to
either,
It were much better to have both than
neither. 200

XXVI

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless ten-
derness,
Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child,
lover, brother,
All that the best can mingle and ex-
press
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one
another,
And love too much, and yet can not love
less;
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

XXVII

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in
heart,
Why did they not then die? — they had
lived too long 210
Should an hour come to bid them breathe
apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things
or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's
art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born *with* them, in them, so in-
tense,
It was their very spirit — not a sense.

XXVIII

They should have lived together deep in
woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they
were

Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice,
and Care: 220
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

XXIX

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving
sleep,
Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would
creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a
brook 230
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with
the air.

XXX

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind —
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can
bind;
Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to
see. 240

XXXI

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but
stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud
roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threat-
ening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon
they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and
high —
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not
die.

XXXII

Anon — she was released, and then she
stray'd
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding
feet, 250

And stumbled almost every step she made;
 And something roll'd before her in a
 sheet,
 Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
 'T was white and indistinct, nor stopp'd
 to meet
 Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed,
 and grasp'd,
 And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

XXXIII

The dream changed: — in a cave she stood,
 its walls
 Were hung with marble icicles, the work
 Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
 Where waves might wash, and seals
 might breed and lurk; 260
 Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
 Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears,
 and mirk
 The sharp rocks look'd below each drop
 they caught,
 Which froze to marble as it fell, — she
 thought.

XXXIV

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
 Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead
 brow,
 Which she essay'd in vain to clear (how
 sweet
 Were once her cares, how idle seem'd
 they now!),
 Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
 Of his quench'd heart; and the sea dirges
 low 270
 Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
 And that brief dream appear'd a life too
 long.

XXXV

And gazing on the dead, she thought his
 face
 Faded, or alter'd into something new —
 Like to her father's features, till each trace
 More like and like to Lambro's aspect
 grew —
 With all his keen worn look and Grecian
 grace;
 And starting, she awoke, and what to
 view?
 Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye
 meets she there?
 'Tis — 'tis her father's — fix'd upon the
 pair! 280

XXXVI

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell
 With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to
 see
 Him whom she deem'd a habitant where
 dwell
 The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
 Perchance the death of one she loved too
 well:
 Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
 It was a moment of that awful kind —
 I have seen such — but must not call to
 mind.

XXXVII

Up Juan sprung to Haidée's bitter shriek,
 And caught her falling, and from off the
 wall 290
 Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to
 wreak
 Vengeance on him who was the cause of
 all:
 Then Lambro, who till now forbore to
 speak,
 Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my
 call,
 A thousand scimitars await the word;
 Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

XXXVIII

And Haidée elung around him; 'Juan,
 'tis —
 'Tis Lambro — 'tis my father! Kneel
 with me —
 He will forgive us — yes — it must be —
 yes.
 Oh! dearest father, in this agony 300
 Of pleasure and of pain — even while I kiss
 Thy garment's hem with transport, can
 it be
 That doubt should mingle with my filial
 joy?
 Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this
 boy.'

XXXIX

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
 Calm in his voice, and calm within his
 eye —
 Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
 He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
 Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the
 blood
 Oft came and went, as there resolved to
 die; 310

In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might
bring.

XL

'Young man, your sword;' so Lambro once
more said :

Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is
free.'

The old man's cheek grew pale, but not
with dread,

And drawing from his belt a pistol, he
Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own
head.'

Then look'd close at the flint, as if to see
'T was fresh — for he had lately used the
lock —

And next proceeded quietly to cock. 320

XLI

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to
bear

Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;
A gentlemanly distance, not too near,

If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

XLII

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's
breath, 330

When Haidée threw herself her boy before;
Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried,
'let death

Descend — the fault is mine; this fatal
shore

He found — but sought not. I have
pledged my faith;

I love him — I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness — know your daugh-
ter's too.'

XLIII

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now
She stood as one who champion'd human
fears —

Pale, statue-like, and stern, she woo'd the
blow; 340

And tall beyond her sex, and their com-
peers,

She drew up to her height, as if to show

A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scan'd
Her father's face — but never stopp'd his
hand.

XLIV

He gazed on her, and she on him; 't was
strange

How like they look'd ! the expression was
the same;

Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted
flame;

For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be — a lioness, though
tame. 350

Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

XLV

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature, differing but in sex and
years;

Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true
blood wears;

And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears
And sweet sensations should have welcomed
both,

Show what the passions are in their full
growth. 360

XLVI

The father paused a moment, then with-
drew

His weapon, and replaced it; but stood
still,

And looking on her, as to look her through,
'Not I,' he said, 'have sought this
stranger's ill;

Not I have made this desolation: few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to
kill;

But I must do my duty — how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

XLVII

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a
ball !' 370

He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew; another answer'd to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And arm'd from boot to turban, one and
all,

Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word, — 'Arrest or slay the
Frank.'

XLVIII

Then, with a sudden movement, he with-
drew

His daughter; while compress'd within
his clasp,

'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's
grasp —

His arms were like a serpent's coil: then
flew

Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates; save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut
through.

XLIX

The second had his cheek laid open; but

The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put

His own well in; so well, ere you could
look,

His man was floor'd, and helpless at his
foot,

With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and
red —

One on the arm, the other on the head.

L

And then they bound him where he fell,
and bore

Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the
shore,

Where lay some ships which were to sail
at nine.

They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reach'd some galliots, placed
in line;

On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stow'd him, with strict orders to the
watches.

LI

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,

And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,

Handsome and young, enjoying all the
present,

Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing is suddenly to sea sent,

Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot
move,

And all because a lady fell in love.

LII

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears,
green tea!

Than whom Cassandra was not more proph-
etic;

For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black

Bohea:

'T is pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more
serious,

LIII

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Nalad of the Phlegethotic rill!

Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers
ill?

I would take refuge in weak punch, but rack
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I
fall

My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

LIV

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe —
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely
wounded;

Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom
bounded?

She was not one to weep, and rave, and
chafe,

And then give way, subdued because sur-
rounded;

Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

LV

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fountains; there grain, and flower,
and fruit,

Gush from the earth until the land runs
o'er;

But there, too, many a poison-tree has
root,

And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's
foot,

Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man. 440

LVI

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human clay is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's
hour,
And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's
dower;
But her large dark eye show'd deep Pas-
sion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

LVII

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth,
and fair, 450
Till slowly charged with thunder they dis-
play
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and de-
spair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian
veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted
plains.

LVIII

The last sight which she saw was Juan's
gore,
And he himself o'er-master'd and cut
down;
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her
own; 460
Thus much she view'd an instant and no
more, —
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive
groan;
On her sire's arm, which until now scarce
had
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

LIX

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure
dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which
ran o'er;
And her head droop'd as when the lily lies
O'er-charged with rain: her summon'd
handmaids bore

Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their
store, 470
But she defied all means they could em-
ploy,
Like one life could not hold, nor death de-
stroy.

LX

Days lay she in that state unchanged,
though chill —
With nothing livid, still her lips were
red;
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent
still;
No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely
dead;
Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face
bred
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of
soul —
She had so much, earth could not claim the
whole. 480

LXI

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,
But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect
throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the
same.

LXII

She woke at length, but not as sleepers
wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd some-
thing new, 490
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy
ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still
true
Brought back the sense of pain without the
cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

XLIII

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;

She saw them watch her without asking
 why,
 And reck'd not who around her pillow
 sat; ⁵⁰⁰
 Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a
 sigh
 Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and
 quick chat
 Were tried in vain by those who served;
 she gave
 No sign, save breath, of having left the
 grave.

LXIV

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded
 not;
 Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes
 away;
 She recognized no being, and no spot,
 However dear or cherish'd in their
 day;
 They changed from room to room — but
 all forgot —
 Gentle, but without memory she lay; ⁵¹⁰
 At length those eyes, which they would
 fain be weaning
 Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful
 meaning.

LXV

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
 The harper came, and tuned his instru-
 ment;
 At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
 On him her flashing eyes a moment
 bent,
 Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
 Her thoughts from sorrow through her
 heart re-sent;
 And he begun a long low island song ⁵¹⁹
 Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

LXVI

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
 In time to his old tune; he changed the
 theme,
 And sung of love; the fierce name struck
 through all
 Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
 Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
 To be so being; in a gushing stream
 The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded
 brain,
 Like mountain mists at length dissolved in
 rain.

LXVII

Short solace, vain relief! — thought came
 too quick,
 And whirl'd her brain to madness; she
 arose ⁵²⁰
 As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
 And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
 But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
 Although her paroxysm drew towards its
 close; —
 Her's was a phrensy which disdain'd to
 rave,
 Even when they smote her, in the hope to
 save.

LXVIII

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
 Nothing could make her meet her father's
 face,
 Though on all other things with looks in-
 tense
 She gazed, but none she ever could re-
 trace; ⁵²⁵
 Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
 Avail'd for either; neither change of
 place,
 Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give
 her
 Senses to sleep — the power seem'd gone
 for ever.

LXIX

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus;
 at last,
 Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to
 show
 A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
 And they who watch'd her nearest could
 not know
 The very instant, till the change that cast
 Her sweet face into shadow, dull and
 slow, ⁵³⁰
 Glazed o'er her eyes — the beautiful, the
 black —
 Oh! to possess such lustre — and then lack!

LXX

She died, but not alone; she held within
 A second principle of life, which might
 Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of
 sin;
 But closed its little being without light,
 And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
 Blossom and bough lie wither'd with one
 blight;

In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of
love. 560

LXXI

Thus lived — thus died she; never more on
her

Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was
not made

Through years or moons the inner weight
to bear,

Which colder hearts endure till they are
laid

By age in earth: her days and pleasures
were

Brief, but delightful — such as had not
staid

Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to

dwell. 570

LXXII

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd
away; 570

None but her own and father's grave is
there,

And nothing outward tells of human clay;
Ye could not know where lies a thing so
fair,

No stone is there to show, no tongue to
say

What was; no dirge, except the hollow
sea's,

Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

LXXIII

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o'er her name; and many an
islander

With her sire's story makes the night less
long;

Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with
her: 580

If she loved rashly, her life paid for
wrong —

A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the
danger,

For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ALASTOR

OR

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

[Publ. 1816]

*Nondum amarem, et amare amarem,
quererem quid amarem, amans amare.
Confessions of St. Augustine.*

MRS. SHELLEY, in her account of *Alastor*, writes as follows: "None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude — the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspect of the visible universe inspires, with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts, give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near, he here represented in such colors as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death."

Shelley himself, in his *Preface*, outlines the character of the story: "The poem entitled *Alastor* may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sink profoundly into the frame of his conceptions and afford to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous and tranquil and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful or wise or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense have their respective requisitions on the sym-

pathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave."

EARTH, Ocean, Air, beloved brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with
mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And Winter robing with pure snow and
crowns
Of starry ice the gray grass and bare
boughs;
If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she
breathes
Her first sweet kisses, — have been dear to
me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; then for-
give
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favor now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favor my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some love
ghost,
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its
own stillness,
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange
tears,
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmed night

To render up thy charge; and, though
ne'er yet

Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday
thought,

Has shone within me, that serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my
strain

May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven
hymns

Of night and day, and the deep heart of
man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence
reared,

But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyra-
mid

Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilder-
ness :

A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden
decked

With weeping flowers, or votive cypress
wreath,

The lone couch of his everlasting sleep :
Gentle, and brave, and generous, — no lorn
bard

Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious
sigh :

He lived, he died, he sung in solitude. 60
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate
notes,

And virgins, as unknown he passed, have
pined

And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to
burn,

And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient
air

Sent to his heart its choicest impulses. 70
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past

In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had passed,
he left

His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered
lands.

Many a wide waste and tangled wilder-
ness

Has lured his fearless steps; and he has
bought

With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage
men,

His rest and food. Nature's most secret
steps

He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies

Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke, or where bitumen
lakes

On black bare pointed islets ever best
With sluggish surge, or where the secret
caves,

Rugged and dark, winding among the
springs

Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes 90

Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent with crystal column, and clear
shrines

Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chryso-
lite.

Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of
heaven

And the green earth, lost in his heart its
claims

To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his
home,

Until the doves and squirrels would par-
take

From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts when-
e'er

The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old :
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the
waste

Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
 Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
 Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of
 strange,
 Sculptured on alabaster obelisk
 Or jasper tomb or mutilated sphinx,
 Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills
 Conceals. Among the ruined temples
 there,
 Stupendous columns, and wild images
 Of more than man, where marble daemons
 watch
 The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead
 men
 Hang their mute thoughts on the mute
 walls around, 120
 He lingered, poring on memorials
 Of the world's youth: through the long
 burning day
 Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor,
 when the moon
 Filled the mysterious halls with floating
 shades
 Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant
 mind
 Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
 The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his
 food, 129
 Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
 And spread her matting for his couch, and
 stole
 From duties and repose to tend his steps,
 Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
 To speak her love, and watched his nightly
 sleep,
 Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
 Parted in slumber, whence the regular
 breath
 Of innocent dreams arose; then, when red
 morn
 Made paler the pale moon, to her cold
 home
 Wildered, and wan, and panting, she re-
 turned.

The Poet, wandering on, through Ara-
 bie, 140
 And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
 And o'er the aerial mountains which pour
 down
 Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
 In joy and exultation held his way;

Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
 Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants en-
 twine
 Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
 Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
 His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
 There came, a dream of hopes that never
 yet 150
 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a
 veiled maid
 Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
 Her voice was like the voice of his own
 soul
 Heard in the calm of thought; its music
 long,
 Like woven sounds of streams and breezes,
 held
 His inmost sense suspended in its web
 Of many-colored woof and shifting hues.
 Knowledge and truth and virtue were her
 theme,
 And lofty hopes of divine liberty, 159
 Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
 Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
 Of her pure mind kindled through all her
 frame
 A permeating fire; wild numbers then
 She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous
 sobs
 Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands
 Were bare alone, sweeping from some
 strange harp
 Strange symphony, and in their branching
 veins
 The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
 The beating of her heart was heard to fill
 The pauses of her music, and her breath
 Tumultuously accorded with those fits 171
 Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
 As if her heart impatiently endured
 Its bursting burden; at the sound he turned,
 And saw by the warm light of their own
 life
 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now
 bare.
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of
 night,
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
 Outstretched, and pale, and quivering
 eagerly. 176
 His strong heart sunk and sickened with
 excess
 Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs,
 and quelled

His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
 Her panting bosom : — she drew back awhile,
 Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
 With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
 Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
 Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
 Involved and swallowed up the vision;
 sleep, 189
 Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
 Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance —
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
 Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
 Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
 The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes 200
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
 The spirit of sweet human love has sent
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
 He overleaps the bounds. Alas ! alas !
 Were limbs and breath and being inter-twined
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, forever lost 209
 In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
 That beautiful shape ! Does the dark gate of death
 Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
 O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds
 And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake
 Lead only to a black and watery depth,
 While death's blue vault with loathliest vapors hung,
 Where every shade which the foul grave exhales

Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
 Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
 This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart;
 The insatiate hope which it awakened 220
 stung
 His brain even like despair.

While daylight held
 The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
 With his still soul. At night the passion came,
 Like the fierce fiend of a custerped dream,
 And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
 Into the darkness. As an eagle, grasped
 In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
 Burn with the poison, and precipitates
 Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud, 230
 Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
 O'er the wide airy wilderness: thus driven
 By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
 Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
 Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
 Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,
 He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
 Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
 Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on 239
 Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
 Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
 Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
 Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
 Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
 Day after day, a weary waste of hours,
 Bearing within his life the brooding care
 That ever fed on its decaying flame.
 And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair,
 Sere by the autumn of strange suffering,
 Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand
 Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;
 Life, and the lustre that consumed it, 251
 shone,
 As in a furnace burning secretly,

From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering
awe

Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit
of Wind,

With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and
feet ²⁶⁰

Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In its career; the infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a
dream

Of after times; but youthful maidens,
taught

By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him with false
names

Brother and friend, would press his pallid
hand

At parting, and watch, dim through tears,
the path ²⁷⁰

Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasman shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was
there,

Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and, with strong
wings

Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright
course

High over the immeasurable main.

His eyes pursued its flight: — 'Thou hast a
home, ²⁸⁰

Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine
home,

Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy
neck

With thine, and welcome thy return with
eyes

Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying
notes,

Spirit more vast than thine, frame more
attuned

To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and
heaven

That echoes not my thoughts? ' A gloomy
smile ²⁹⁰

Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering
lips.

For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death ex-
posed,

Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own
strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts, he looked
around.

There was no fair fiend near him, not a
sight

Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his
gaze. ³⁰⁰

It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail
joints

Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's
waste;

For well he knew that mighty Shadow
loves

The alimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny; sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening
the waves. ³¹⁰

Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat; he spread his cloak
aloft

On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil
sea

Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat. A whirlwind swept it
on, ³²⁰

With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the
tempest's scourge
Like serpents straggling in a vulture's
grasp.

Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool
driven

With dark obliterating course, he sate:
As if their genii were the ministers 330
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate,
Holding the steady helm. Evening came
on;

The beams of sunset hung their rainbow
hues

High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted
spray

That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in dusker wreaths her braided
locks

O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of Day;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every
side 340

More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual
war

Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to
mock

The calm and spangled sky. The little
boat

Still fled before the storm; still fled, like
foam

Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean; safely fled —
As if that frail and wasted human form 350
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight

The moon arose; and lo! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and
the waves

Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound forever. — Who shall
save? —

The boat fled on, — the boiling torrent
drove, —

The crags closed round with black and
jagged arms, 359

The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth
wave,

The little boat was driven. A cavern there

Yawned, and amid its slant and winding
depths

Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on
With unrelaxing speed. — 'Vision and
Love!'

The Poet cried aloud, 'I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and
death

Shall not divide us long.'

The boat pursued

The windings of the cavern. Daylight
shone 370

At length upon that gloomy river's flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the
waves

Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the moun-
tain, riven,

Exposed those black depths to the azure
sky,

Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample
chasm: 379

Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarled roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant
arms

In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
Reflecting yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous
calm.

Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round and round and
round,

Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where through an opening of the rocky
bank 391

The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet 'mid those battling tides
Is left, the boat paused shuddering. —
Shall it sink

Down the abyss? Shall the reverting
stress

Of that resistless gulf embosom it?
Now shall it fall? — A wandering stream
of wind

Breathed from the west, has caught the
expanded sail,

And, lo! with gentle motion between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream, 400

Beneath a woven grove, it sails, and, hark !
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar
With the breeze murmuring in the musical
woods.

Where the embowering trees recede, and
leave

A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow
flowers

Forever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive
task,

Which naught but vagrant bird, or wanton
wind, ⁴¹⁰

Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet
longed

To deck with their bright hues his withered
hair,

But on his heart its solitude returned,
And he forbore. Not the strong impulse
hid

In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and
shadowy frame,

Had yet performed its ministry; it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the
floods ⁴¹⁹

Of night close over it.

The noonday sun

Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnifi-
cence

A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge
caves,

Scooped in the dark base of their airy
rocks,

Mocking its moans, respond and roar for-
ever.

The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as, led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier
Death,

He sought in Nature's dearest haunt some
bank, ⁴²⁹

Her cradle and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang

Tremulous and pale. Like restless ser-
pents, clothed

In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow
around ⁴⁴⁰

The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants'
eyes,

With gentle meanings, and most innocent
wiles,

Fold their beams round the hearts of those
that love,

These twine their tendrils with the wedded
boughs,

Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make network of the dark blue light of day
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy
lawns

Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed
with blooms ⁴⁵⁰

Minute yet beautiful. One darkest gleam
Sends from its woods of musk-rose twined
with jasmine

A soul-dissolving odor to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through
the dell

Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters,
keep

Their noonday watch, and sail among the
shades,

Like vaporous shapes half-seen; beyond, a
well,

Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent
wave,

Images all the woven boughs above, ⁴⁵⁹
And each depending leaf, and every speck

Of azure sky darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves

Its portraiture, but some inconstant star,
Between one foliated lattice twinkling fair,

Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,

Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of
noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected
lines ⁴⁷⁰

Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He
heard

The motion of the leaves — the grass that
sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to
feel

An unaccustomed presence — and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret
springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit
seemed

To stand beside him — clothed in no bright
robes 480

Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world
affords

Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;
But undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech
assuming,

Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was; only — when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness — two
eyes,

Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of
thought, 490

And seemed with their serene and azure
smiles

To beckon him.

Obedient to the light

That shone within his soul, he went, pur-
suing

The windings of the dell. The rivulet,
Wanton and wild, through many a green
ravine

Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it
fell

Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound. Now on the polished
stones

It danced, like childhood laughing as it
went;

Then, through the plain in tranquil wan-
derings crept, 500

Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness. — 'O stream!
Whose source is inaccessible profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome still-
ness,

Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow
gulfs,

Thy searchless fountain and invisible course,
Have each their type in me; and the wide
sky

And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering
cloud 510

Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside,
when stretched

Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall
waste

I' the passing wind!

Beside the grassy shore

Of the small stream he went; he did im-
press

On the green moss his tremulous step, that
caught

Strong shuddering from his burning limbs.
As one

Roused by some joyous madness from the
couch

Of fever, he did move; yet not like him
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the
flame 520

Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he
went

Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss,
and stemmed

The struggling brook; tall spires of win-
dlestrae

Threw their thin shadows down the rugged
slope,

And nought but gnarled roots of ancient
pines 530

Branchless and blasted, clenched with
grasping roots

The unwilling soil. A gradual change was
here

Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair
grows thin

And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs: — so from
his steps

Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful
shade

Of the green groves, with all their odorous
winds

And musical motions. Calm he still pur-
sued

The stream, that with a larger volume
now 540

Rolled through the labyrinthine dell ; and
there

Fretted a path through its descending
curves

With its wintry speed. On every side now
rose

Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice

Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning
caves,

Whose windings gave ten thousand various
tongues

To the loud stream. Lo ! where the pass
expands 550

Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems with its accumulated crags
To overhang the world ; for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty
streams,

Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous
gloom

Of leaden-colored even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the
verge

Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity, 560

Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response at each pause
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder and the hiss of homeless
streams

Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad
river

Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
Fell into that immeasurable void,
Scattering its waters to the passing
winds. 570

Yet the gray precipice and solemn pine
And torrent were not all ; — one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast
mountain,

Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlooked in its serenity
The dark earth and the bending vault of
stars.

It was a tranquil spot that seemed to smile
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,

And did embower with leaves forever
green 580

And berries dark the smooth and even
space

Of its inviolated floor ; and here
The children of the autumnal whirlwind
bore

In wanton sport those bright leaves whose
decay,

Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,
Rivals the pride of summer. 'T is the haunt
Of every gentle wind whose breath can
teach

The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
One human step alone, has ever broken
The stillness of its solitude ; one voice 590
Alone inspired its echoes ; — even that voice
Which hither came, floating among the
winds,

And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Of all the grace and beauty that endowed
Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern
mould,

Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching
moss,

Commit the colors of that varying cheek, 600
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping
ing eyes.

The dim and horned moon hung low, and
poured

A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow
mist

Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and
drank

Wan moonlight even to fulness ; not a star
Shone, not a sound was heard ; the very
winds,

Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace. — O storm
of death,

Whose sightless speed divides this sullen
night ! 610

And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art king of this frail world ! from the red
field

Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,

A mighty voice invokes thee ! Ruin calls
His brother Death ! A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the
world ; 620

Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and
men

Go to their graves like flowers or creeping
worms,

Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green
recess

The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that
death

Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul

To images of the majestic past, 629

That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when
they breathe

Through some dim latticed chamber. He
did place

His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine ; upon an ivied stone

Reclined his languid head ; his limbs did
rest,

Diffused and motionless, on the smooth
brink

Of that obscurest chasm ; — and thus he
lay,

Surrendering to their final impulses

The hovering powers of life. Hope and
Despair,

The torturers, slept ; no mortal pain or
fear 640

Marred his repose ; the influxes of sense

And his own being, unalloyed by pain,

Yet feeblér and more feeble, calmly fed

The stream of thought, till he lay breath-
ing there

At peace, and faintly smiling. His last
sight

Was the great moon, which o'er the western
line

Of the wide world her mighty horn sus-
pended,

With whose dun beams inwoven darkness
seemed

To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills

It rests ; and still as the divided frame 650

Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,

That ever beat in mystic sympathy

With Nature's ebb and flow, grew feeblér
still ;

And when two lessening points of light
alone

Gleamed through the darkness, the alter-
nate gasp

Of his faint respiration scarce did stir

The stagnate night : — till the minutest ray

Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in
his heart.

It paused — it fluttered. But when hea-
ven remained 659

Utterly black, the murky shades involved

An image silent, cold, and motionless,

As their own voiceless earth and vacant
air.

Even as a vapor fed with golden beams

That ministered on sunlight, ere the west

Eclipsed it, was now that wondrous frame —

No sense, no motion, no divinity —

A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings

The breath of heaven did wander — a bright
stream

Once fed with many-voiced waves — a
dream

Of youth, which night and time have
quenched forever — 670

Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered
now.

Oh, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,

Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth
gleam

With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs
exhale

From vernal blooms fresh fragrance ! Oh,
that God,

Profuse of poisons, would concede the
chalice

Which but one living man has drained, wh-
now,

Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feel

No proud exemption in the blighting curs

He bears, over the world wanders for-
ever, 680

Lone as incarnate death ! Oh, that the
dream

Of dark magician in his visioned cave,

Raking the cinders of a crucible

For life and power, even when his feeble
hand

Shakes in its last decay, were the true law

Of this so lovely world ! But thou art fled,

Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn

Robes in its golden beams, — ah ! thou
hast fled !

The brave, the gentle and the beautiful,

The child of grace and genius. Heartless things 690
 Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
 And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
 From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
 In vesper low or joyous orison,
 Lifts still its solemn voice :— but thou art fled —
 Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
 Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
 Been purest ministers, who are, alas !
 Now thou art not ! Upon those pallid lips
 So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes 700
 That image sleep in death, upon that form
 Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
 Be shed — not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
 Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
 Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence, 710
 And all the shows o' the world, are frail and vain
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
 It is a woe "too deep for tears," when all
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

ADONAI8

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF
JOHN KEATS

[Publ. 1821]

Ἄστρον πρὶν μὲν ἑλαπτοεὶ ἐπὶ ζώοντι ἄνθρωπῳ.
 Νῦν δὲ θάρον, λάμπειε ἱσχυρότερον ἐν φθαρμένοις.
 PLATO.

EXTRACT FROM SHELLEY'S LETTER
TO SEVERN

"I send you the Elegy on poor Keats — and I wish it were better worth your acceptance. You will see, by the preface, that it was written before I could obtain any particular account of his last moments. . . .

"In spite of his transcendent genius, Keats never was, nor ever will be, a popular poet; and the total neglect and obscurity in which the astonishing remnants of his mind still lie, was hardly to be dissipated by a writer, who, however he may differ from Keats in more important qualities, at least resembles him in that accidental one, a want of popularity.

"I have little hope, therefore, that the poem I send you will excite any attention, nor do I feel assured that a critical notice of his writings would find a single reader. But for these considerations, it had been my intention to have collected the remnants of his compositions, and to have published them with a Life and Criticism. Has he left any poems or writings of whatsoever kind, and in whose possession are they? Perhaps you would oblige me by information on this point."

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἔλαβε, Βίβιν, ποτὶ οὐδὲν σθένος, φάρμακον οὐδεν.
 Τοιούτους χεῖλεσσι ποτὶδραμε, κοῦτε ἐγλυκύνθη;
 Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσούτων ἀνέμερος, ἢ καρέσαι τοι
 Ἡ δούρα χαλίοισι τὸ φάρμακον ἐπέφηνεν ἔλαβ;
 MOSCOPUS, EPIGRAM. BROS.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove, at least, that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an

open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric *Paris* and *Woman* and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu and Mr. Barrett and Mr. Howard Payne and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they

strain at here after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career — may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

I

I **WEEP** for Adonais — he is dead!

Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a
head!

And thou, sad Hour, selected from all
years

To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure
compeers,

And teach them thine own sorrow! Say:
'With me

Died Adonais; till the Future dares

Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!'

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when
he lay,

When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft
which flies

In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured
breath,

Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the
corse beneath,

He had adorned and hid the coming bulk
of death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais — he is dead!

Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and
weep!

Yet wherefore? Quench within their
burning bed

Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart
keep

Like his a mute and uncomplaining
sleep;

For he is gone where all things wise and fair
 Descend. Oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again !
 Lament anew, Urania ! — He died,
 Who was the sire of an immortal strain,
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
 Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
 Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
 Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
 And happier they their happiness who knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
 In which suns perished; others more sublime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
 The nursing of thy widowhood, who grew,
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished
 And fed with true-love tears instead of dew;
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,

The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
 The broken lily lies — the storm is over-past.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
 A grave among the eternal. — Come away !
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof ! while still
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
 Awake him not ! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more !
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
 So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
 Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais ! — The quick Dreams,
 The passion-winged ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not, —
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprang;
 and mourn their lot
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hand clasps his
cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings,
and cries,
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not
dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there
lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from
his brain.'
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise !
She knew not 't was her own; as with no
stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept
its rain.

xi

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming
them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and
threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls be-
gem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more
weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen
cheek.

XII

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth whence it was wont to draw
the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the
guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music; the
damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night
clips,
It flashed through his pale limbs, and
passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came — Desires and Adora-
tions,
Winged Persuasions and veiled Desti-
nies,

Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering
Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Fanta-
sies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by
the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp; — the moving pomp
might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal
stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into
thought
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet
sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch tower, and her hair
unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn
the ground,
Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in
their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless moun-
tains,
And feeds her grief with his remem-
bered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or
fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young
green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing
day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more
dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined
away
Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the
woodmen hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and
she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn
were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is
flown,

For whom should she have waked the
sullen year?

To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais; wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odor, to
sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melo-
dious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's
domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth
complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty
nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of
Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy inno-
cent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its
earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving
year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous
tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, reap-
pear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead
Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every
brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and
brere;
And the green lizard and the golden
snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their
trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and
hill and Ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart
has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and
motion,
From the great morning of the world
when first

God dawned on Chaos; in its stream im-
mersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer
light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred
thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's
delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewed
might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit
tender.
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when
splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine
death
And mock the merry worm that wakes
beneath.
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone
which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the
sheath
By sightless lightning? the intense atom
glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold
repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of
what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and
mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what
life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue and fields are
green,
Evening must usher night, night urge
the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year
wake year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless
Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's
core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears
and sighs.'

And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
 Had held in holy silence, cried, 'Arise !'
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Had left the Earth a corpse;—sorrow and fear
 So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere
 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
 And human hearts which, to her airy tread
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell;
 And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
 'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,

As silent lightning leaves the starless night !
 Leave me not !' cried Urania; her distress
 Roused Death; Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

'Stay yet awhile ! speak to me once again;
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain
 That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,
 With food of saddest memory kept alive,
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
 Of thee, my Adonais ! I would give
 All that I am to be as thou now art !
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart !

XXVII

'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
 Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den ?
 Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
 Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear ?
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XXVIII

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
 The obscene ravena, clamorous o'er the dead;
 The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
 Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
 And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
 When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
 The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
 And smiled !—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
 They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles
spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its de-
light
Making earth bare and veiling heaven,
and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or
shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's aw-
ful night.'

XXX

Thus ceased she; and the mountain
shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles
rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his
song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music
from his tongue.

XXXI

'Midst others of less note, came one frail
Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wil-
derness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged
way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father
and their prey.

XXXII

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—
A love in desolation masked;— a Power
Girt round with weakness;— it can
scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;— even whilst we
speak

Is it not broken? On the withering
flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a
cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the
heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies over-
blown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and
blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress
cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses
grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday
dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it;
of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the
hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew
that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured:
'Who art thou?'
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined
brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's— oh! I
that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the
dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle
thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white
death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the de-
parted one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacri-
fice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh,
 What deaf and viperous murderer could
 crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of
 woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself
 disown;
 It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate and
 wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast
 alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver
 lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy
 fame!
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from
 me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered
 name!
 But be thyself, and know thyself to
 be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'er-
 flow;
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling
 to thee;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret
 brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt
 — as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is
 fled
 Far from these carrion kites that scream
 below;
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring
 dead;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting
 now.
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit
 shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it
 came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must
 glow
 Through time and change, unquenchably
 the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid
 hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth
 not sleep —
 He hath awakened from the dream of
 life —
 'T is we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance strike with our spir-
 it's knife
 Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
 Convulse us and consume us day by
 day,
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within
 our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our
 night;
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall de-
 light,
 Can touch him not and torture not again;
 From the contagion of the world's slow
 stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray
 in vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to
 burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented
 urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes — 't is Death is dead,
 not he;
 Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young
 Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from
 thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and
 thou Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf
 hadst thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it
 bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its
 despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is
 heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan

Of thunder to the song of night's sweet
bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and
stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power
may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wea-
ried love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it
above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely; he
doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic
stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world,
compelling there
All new successions to the forms they
wear,
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks
its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may
bear,
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the
Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished
not;
Like stars to their appointed height they
climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot
blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty
thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal
lair,
And love and life contend in it for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live
there
And move like winds of light on dark and
stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond
mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, — his solemn agony had not

Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death ap-
proved;
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing
reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on earth
are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot
die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
'Thou art become as one of us,' they
cry;
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has
long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of
our throng!'

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come
forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him
aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the penda-
lous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious
might
Satiates the void circumference; then
shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make
thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured
thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy; 'tis
nought
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have
wrought;
For such as he can lend, — they borrow
not
Glory from those who made the world
their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of
thought

Who waged contention with their time's
decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass
away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Para-
dise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered
mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant corses
dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall
lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the
dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass
is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which
dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sub-
lime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and
beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their
camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extin-
guished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too
young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which con-
signed
Its charge to each; and if the seal is
set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning
mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou
find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest
home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's
bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and
pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's
shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. —
Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou
dost seek!
Follow where all is fled! — Rome's
azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are
weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth
to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink,
my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before; from all
things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now
depart!
A light is passed from the revolving
year,
And man, and woman; and what still is
dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee
wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind
whispers near;
'T is Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can
join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Uni-
verse,
That Beauty in which all things work
and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing
Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining
Love
Which through the web of being blindly
wove
By man and beast and earth and air and
sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors
of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams
on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in
song

Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling
through

Whose sails were never to the tempest
given;

The inassy earth and spherèd skies are
riveu!

I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;

Whilst, burning through the inmost veil
of Heaven,

The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal
are.

SONNET. — OZYMANDIAS

[Publ. 1818]

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: 'Two vast and trunkless legs of
stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the
sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose
frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold com-
mand,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions
read

Which yet survive, stamped on these life-
less things,

The hand that mocked them and the heart
that fed.

And on the pedestal these words appear —
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and de-
spair!"

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE
EUGANEAN HILLS

[Publ. 1819]

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep, wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on

Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind, the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep,
And sinks down, down — like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still,
Lunging with divided will
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.

What, if there no friends will greet?
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat?
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 't will wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no.
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins, and chill,
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few gray rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughtered town
When a king in glory rides

Through the pomp of fratricides.
 Those unburied bones around 60
 There is many a mournful sound;
 There is no lament for him,
 Like a sunless vapor, dim,
 Who once clothed with life and thought
 What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
 In the waters of wide Agony.
 To such a one this morn was led
 My bark, by soft winds piloted.
 Mid the mountains Euganean 70
 I stood listening to the psan
 With which the legioned rooks did hail
 The sun's uprise majestic;
 Gathering round with wings all hoar,
 Through the dewy mist they soar
 Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
 Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
 Flecked with fire and azure, lie
 In the unfathomable sky, 80
 So their plumes of purple grain,
 Starred with drops of golden rain,
 Gleam above the sunlight woods,
 As in silent multitudes
 On the morning's fitful gale
 Through the broken mist they sail,
 And the vapors cloven and gleaming
 Follow down the dark steep streaming,
 Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
 Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea 90
 The waveless plain of Lombardy,
 Bounded by the vaporous air,
 Islanded by cities fair.
 Underneath day's azure eyes,
 Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
 A peopled labyrinth of walls,
 Amphitrite's destined halls,
 Which her hoary sire now paves
 With his blue and beaming waves.
 Lo! the sun upsprings behind, 100
 Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
 On the level quivering line
 Of the waters crystalline;
 And before that chasm of light,
 As within a furnace bright,
 Column, tower, and dome and spire,
 Shine like obelisks of fire,
 Pointing with inconstant motion
 From the altar of dark ocean
 To the sapphire-tinted skies; 110
 As the flames of sacrifice

From the marble shrines did rise
 As to pierce the dome of gold
 Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City! thou hast been
 Ocean's child, and then his queen;
 Now is come a darker day,
 And thou soon must be his prey,
 If the power that raised thee here
 Hallow so thy watery bier. 120
 A less drear ruin than than now,
 With thy conquest-branded brow
 Stooping to the slave of slaves
 From thy throne among the waves,
 Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
 Flies, as once before it flew,
 O'er thine isles depopulate,
 And all is in its ancient state,
 Save where many a palace-gate
 With green sea-flowers overgrown 130
 Like a rock of ocean's own,
 Topples o'er the abandoned sea
 As the tides change sullenly.
 The fisher on his watery way,
 Wandering at the close of day,
 Will spread his sail and seize his oar
 Till he pass the gloomy shore,
 Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
 Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
 Lead a rapid masque of death 140
 O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
 Quivering through aerial gold,
 As I now behold them here,
 Would imagine not they were
 Sepulchres, where human forms,
 Like pollution-nourished worms,
 To the corpes of greatness cling,
 Murdered, and now mouldering.
 But if Freedom should awake 150
 In her omnipotence, and shake
 From the Celtic Anarch's hold
 All the keys of dungeons cold,
 Where a hundred cities lie
 Chained like thee, ingloriously,
 Thou and all thy sister band
 Might adorn this sunny land,
 Twining memories of old time
 With new virtues more sublime.
 If not, perish thou and they! — 160
 Clouds which stain truth's rising day
 By her sun consumed away —
 Earth can spare ye; while like flowers,
 In the waste of years and hours,

From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish ! let there only be
Floating o'er thy heartless sea,
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally, 170
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;—
That a tempest-cleaving Swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung 180
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror. What though yet
Poesy's unfailing River,
Which through Albion winds forever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled ?
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay 190
Aught thine own ? oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sun-like soul ?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscent power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn 200
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart,
Sees things unearthly;—so thou art,
Mighty spirit ! so shall be
The City that did refuge thee !

Lo, the sun floats up the sky,
Like thought-winged Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height.
From the sea a mist has spread, 210
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.
By the skirts of that gray cloud
Many-domed Padua prond
Stands, a peopled solitude,
Mid the harvest-shining plain,

Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow 220
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home. 230
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 't is a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.
Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelein,
Till Death cried, 'I win, I win !' 240
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before, 250
Both have ruled from shore to shore—
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray. 260
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth;
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny della, 270
One light flame among the brakes,

While the boundless forest shakes,
 And its mighty trunks are torn
 By the fire thus lowly born;—
 The spark beneath his feet is dead,
 He starts to see the flames it fed
 Howling through the darkened sky
 With myriad tongues victoriously,
 And sinks down in fear;—so thou,
 O Tyranny! beholdest now
 Light around thee, and thou hearest
 The loud flames ascend, and fearest.
 Grovel on the earth! ay, hide
 In the dust thy purple pride!

280

Noon descends around me now.
 'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
 When a soft and purple mist,
 Like a vaporous amethyst,
 Or an air-dissolved star
 Mingling light and fragrance, far
 From the curved horizon's bound
 To the point of heaven's profound
 Fills the overflowing sky.
 And the plains that silent lie
 Underneath; the leaves unsodden
 Where the infant frost has trodden
 With his morning-winged feet,
 Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
 And the red and golden vines,
 Piercing with their trellised lines
 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
 The dun and bladed grass no less,
 Pointing from this hoary tower
 In the windless air; the flower
 Glimmering at my feet; the line
 Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
 In the south dimly islanded;
 And the Alps, whose snows are spread
 High between the clouds and sun;
 And of living things each one;
 And my spirit, which so long
 Darkened this swift stream of song,—
 Interpenetrated lie
 By the glory of the sky:
 Be it love, light, harmony,
 Odor, or the soul of all
 Which from heaven like dew doth
 fall,
 Or the mind which feeds this verse
 Peopling the lone universe.
 Noon descends, and after noon
 Autumn's evening meets me soon,

320

Leading the infantine moon
 And that one star, which to her
 Almost seems to minister
 Half the crimson light she brings
 From the sunset's radiant springs;
 And the soft dreams of the morn
 (Which like winged winds had borne
 To that silent isle, which lies
 Mid remembered agonies,
 The frail bark of this lone being)
 Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
 And its ancient pilot, Pain,
 Sits beside the helm again.

310

Other flowering isles must be
 In the sea of life and agony;
 Other spirits float and flee
 O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
 On some rock the wild wave wraps,
 With folding wings they waiting sit
 For my bark, to pilot it
 To some calm and blooming cove,
 Where for me, and those I love,
 May a windless bower be built,
 Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
 In a dell mid lawny hills,
 Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
 And soft sunshine, and the sound
 Of old forests echoing round,
 And the light and smell divine
 Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
 We may live so happy there,
 That the spirits of the air,
 Envyng us, may even entice
 To our healing paradise
 The polluting multitude;
 But their rage would be subdued
 By that clime divine and calm,
 And the winds whose wings rain balm
 On the uplifted soul, and leaves
 Under which the bright sea heaves;
 While each breathless interval
 In their whisperings musical
 The inspired soul supplies
 With its own deep melodies.
 And the love which heals all strife,
 Circling, like the breath of life,
 All things in that sweet abode
 With its own mild brotherhood.
 They, not it, would change; and soon
 Every sprite beneath the moon
 Would repent its envy vain,
 And the earth grow young again.

340

350

360

370

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
 The waves are dancing fast and bright;
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent night;
 The breath of the moist earth is light
 Around its unexpanded buds;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
 The City's voice itself is soft like Soli-
 tude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor 10
 With green and purple sea-weeds
 strown;
 I see the waves upon the shore,
 Like light dissolved in star-showers,
 thrown;
 I sit upon the sands alone —
 The lightning of the noontide ocean
 Is flashing round me, and a tone
 Arises from its measured motion,
 How sweet! did any heart now share in my
 emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
 Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory
 crowned —
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor lei-
 sure.
 Others I see whom these surround —
 Smiling they live, and call life plea-
 sure; —
 To me that cup has been dealt in another
 measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
 Even as the winds and waters are;
 I could lie down like a tired child, 30
 And weep away the life of care
 Which I have borne and yet must bear,
 Till death like sleep might steal on me,
 And I might feel in the warm air

My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last mo-
 notony

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
 As I when this sweet day is gone,
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
 Insults with this untimely moan; 40
 They might lament — for I am one
 Whom men love not, — and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in
 memory yet.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

[Publ. 1820]

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Au-
 tumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the
 leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter
 fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic
 red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and
 low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and
 fill 10
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in
 air)
 With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's
 commotion,
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves
 are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven
 and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are
spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim
verge 21
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou
dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing
night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst:
oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer
dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Bais's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet the sense faints picturing them!
thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far
below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which
wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with
fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh,
hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and
share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over
heaven, 49
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have
striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore
need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and
bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and
proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal
tone, 60
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit
fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new
birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among man-
kind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far be-
hind? 70

THE INDIAN SERENADE

[Publ. 1822]

I

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright;
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber window, sweet!

II

The wandering airs, they faint
On the dark, the silent stream;
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
Oh, belovèd as thou art!

III

Oh, lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast,
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

[Publ. 1819]

I

THE fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle:
Why not I with thine?

II

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

THE CLOUD

[Publ. 1820]

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting
flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that
waken

The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's
breast,

As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 't is my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or
stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue
smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eye
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the
lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy
nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,

May have broken the woof of my tent's
thin roof,

The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built
tent,

Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me
on high,
Are each paved with the moon and
these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel
and swim,

When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like
shape,

Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, —
The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch, through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to
my chair,

Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing
below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and
shores;

I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their
convex gleams

Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost
from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK

[Publ. 1820]

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,

That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever
singing.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just
begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, — but yet I hear thy shrill
delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see — we feel that it is
there;

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As when Night is bare
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven
is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of
melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded
not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,

Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, — which over-
flows her bower:

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering un beholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen
it from the view: 50

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those
heavy winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth
surpass. 60

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thing;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so
divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some
hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields or waves or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what igno-
rance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be;
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee;
Thou lovest — but ne'er knew love's sad
satiety. 80

Waking or asleep
Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream —
Or how could thy notes flow in such a cer-
tal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
saddest thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should
come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then — as I am
listening now.

ODE TO LIBERTY

[Publ. 1820]

Yet Freedom, yet, thy banner torn but flying
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.
Ere now.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the Nations; Liberty,
From heart to heart, from tower to tower,
o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of
its dismay,
And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds
among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed
prey;
Till from its station in the Heaves of
fame 110

The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it
flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftuess, when
there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the
same.

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang
forth;
The burning stars of the abyss were
hurled
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal
earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air; 20
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not; but power from worst
producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery
forms,
And there was war among them, and
despair
Within them, raging without truce or
terms.
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts,
and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell
of storms. 30

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne; palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming
million
Were as to mountain wolves their ragged
caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and
rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous
solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of
waves,
Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves; 41
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and
blood

Till with the stain their inmost souls are
died,
Drove the astonished herds of men from
every side.

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous
waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open
smiles
Of favoring heaven; from their en-
chanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody. 50
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unrecon-
ciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the
sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the in-
fant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is
to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by
many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless
child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did
strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the
Ægean inain 60

V

Athens arose; a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver
towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire gar-
landed,—
A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on
the will 70
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative
skill
Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal
dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and lat-
est oracle.

VI

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and forever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past;
 Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks
 aghast.
 A winged sound of joy, and love, and
 wonder,
 Which soars where Expectation never
 flows,
 Renting the veil of space and time asunder!
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and
 streams, and dew;
 One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever
 new,
 As Athens doth the world with thy de-
 light renew. 90

VII

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom
 fairest,
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmean Mænad,
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy
 dearest
 From that Elysian food was yet un-
 weaned:
 And many a deed of terrible uprightness
 By thy sweet love was sanctified;
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,
 Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius
 died.
 But when tears stained thy robe of vestal
 whiteness,
 And gold profaned thy Capitolian
 throne, 100
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged
 lightness,
 The senate of the tyrants: they sunk
 prone
 Slaves of one tyrant. Palatinus sighed
 Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to
 disown.

VIII

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
 Or utmost islet inaccessible,
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,

Teaching the woods and waves, and desert
 rocks, 110
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
 To talk in echoes sad and stern,
 Of that sublimest lore which man had
 dared unlearn?
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard
 flocks
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the
 Druid's sleep.
 What if the tears rained through thy
 shattered locks
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst
 groan, not weep,
 When from its sea of death, to kill and
 burn,
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
 And made thy world an undistinguishable
 heap. 120

IX

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where
 art thou?
 And then the shadow of thy coming
 fell
 On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow;
 And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
 Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat
 deep,
 Arose in sacred Italy,
 Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
 Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-
 crowned majesty;
 That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
 And burst around their walls, like idle
 foam, 130
 Whilst from the human spirit's deepest
 deep,
 Strange melody with love and awe
 struck dumb
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
 With divine wand traced on our earthly
 home
 Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting
 dome.

X

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou
 terror
 Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of
 the quiver,
 Whose sun-like shafts pierce tempest-
 winged Error,
 As light may pierce the clouds when
 they dis sever

In the calm regions of the orient day! 140
 Luther caught thy wakening glance;
 Like lightning, from his leaden lance
 Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the
 trance
 In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
 And England's prophets hailed thee as
 their queen,
 In songs whose music cannot pass away,
 Though it must flow forever; not un-
 seen
 Before the spirit-sighted countenance
 Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad
 scene
 Beyond whose north he saw, with a de-
 jected mien. 150

XI

The eager hours and reluctant years
 As on a dawn-illuminated mountain stood,
 Trampling to silence their loud hopes and
 fears,
 Darkening each other with their multi-
 tude,
 And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
 Answered Pity from her cave;
 Death grew pale within the grave,
 And Desolation howled to the destroyer,
 Save!
 When, like heaven's sun girt by the ex-
 halation
 Of its own glorious light, thou didst
 arise, 160
 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
 Like shadows: as if day had cloven
 the skies
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
 Men started, staggering with a glad sur-
 prise,
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar
 eyes.

XII

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could
 pall thee then,
 In ominous eclipse? a thousand years,
 Bred from the slime of deep oppression's
 den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and
 tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain
 away; 170
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage,
 stood

Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's
 mitred brood!
 When one, like them, but mightier far
 than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered
 powers,
 Rose; armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the
 sacred bowers
 Of serene heaven. He, by the past pur-
 sued,
 Rests with those dead but unforgotten
 hours,
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their
 ancestral towers. 180

XIII

England yet sleeps: was she not called of
 old?
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling
 thunder
 Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
 Snow-craggs by its reply are cloven in
 sunder;
 O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
 From Pithecusa to Pelorus
 Howls, and leaps, and glares in
 chorus;
 They cry, Be dim, ye lamps of heaven sus-
 pended o'er us!
 Her chains are threads of gold, she need
 but smile
 And they dissolve; but Spain's were
 links of steel, 190
 Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
 Twins of a single destiny! appeal
 To the eternal years enthroned before us
 In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
 All ye have thought and done! Time
 cannot dare conceal.

XIV

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's
 staff,
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
 King-deluded Germany, 200
 His dead spirit lives in thee.
 Why do we fear or hope? thou art already
 free!
 And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
 And glorious world! thou flowery
 wilderness!

Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
 Where desolation clothed with loveliness
 Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
 Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
 The beasts who make their dens thy
 sacred palaces. 210

XV

Oh, that the free would stamp the impious
 name
 Of King into the dust! or write it there,
 So that this blot upon the page of fame
 Were as a serpent's path, which the light
 air
 Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
 Ye the oracle have heard,
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,
 And cut the snaky knots of this foul gor-
 dian word,
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can
 bind
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm, 220
 The axes and the rods which awe man-
 kind;
 The sound has poison in it, 'tis the
 sperm
 Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and
 abhorred;
 Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
 To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant
 worm.

XVI

Oh, that the wise from their bright minds
 would kindle
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim
 world,
 That the pale name of Priest might shrink
 and dwindle
 Into the hell from which it first was
 hurled,
 A scoff of impious pride from fiends im-
 pure; 230
 Till human thoughts might kneel
 alone,
 Each before the judgment-throne
 Of its own aweless soul, or of the power un-
 known!
 Oh, that the words which make the
 thoughts obscure
 From which they spring, as clouds of
 glimmering dew
 From a white lake blot heaven's blue por-
 traiture

Were stripped of their thin masks and
 various hue
 And frowns and smiles and splendors not
 their own,
 Till in the nakedness of false and true
 They stand before their Lord, each to
 receive its due. 240

XVII

He who taught man to vanquish whatso-
 ever
 Can be between the cradle and the grave
 Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain
 endeavor!
 If on his own high will, a willing slave,
 He has enthroned the oppression and the
 oppressor.
 What if earth can clothe and feed
 Amplest millions at their need,
 And power in thought be as the tree within
 the seed?
 Oh, what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
 Driving on fiery wings to Nature's
 throne, 250
 Checks the great mother stooping to ca-
 ress her
 And cries: 'Give me, thy child, do-
 minion
 Over all height and depth?' if Life can
 breed
 New wants, and wealth from those who
 toil and groan
 Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousand-
 fold for one.

XVIII

Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
 Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-
 star
 Beckons the sun from the Eoan wave,
 Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
 Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
 Comes she not, and come ye not, 260
 Rulers of eternal thought,
 To judge with solemn truth life's ill-appor-
 tioned lot?
 Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the
 Fame
 Of what has been, the Hope of what
 will be?
 O Liberty! if such could be thy name
 Wert thou disjoined from these, or thy
 from thee—
 If thine or theirs were treasures to be
 bought

By blood or tears, have not the wise and
free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? — The
solemn harmony 270

XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty sing-
ing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then as a wild swan, when sublimely wing-
ing
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of
dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aerial golden
light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve unburdened of
their rain; 278
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day, —
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far
away
Of the great voice which did its flight sus-
tain,
As waves which lately paved his watery
way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tam-
pestuous play.

TO ———

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burden thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

THE QUESTION

[Publ. 1822]

I

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to
spring,

And gentle odors led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmur-
ing
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to
fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the
stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou might-
est in dream.

II

There grew pied wind-flowers and vio-
lets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the
earth, 10
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose
birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower
that wets —
(Like a child, half in tenderness and
mirth)
Its mother's face with heaven-collected
tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice,
it hears.

III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglan-
tine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-colored
May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups,
whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by
the day, 20
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wander-
ing astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked
with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple
pranked with white;
And starry river buds among the sedge;
And floating water-lilies, broad and
bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the
hedge
With moonlight beams of their own
watery light; 30

And bulrushes and reeds, of such deep
green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober
sheen.

V

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural
bowers

Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the
Hours

Within my hand, — and then, elate and
gay,

I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it! — Oh, to
whom? 40

TO NIGHT

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

SWIFTLY walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear, —
Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day; 10
Kiss her until she be wearied out;
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand —
Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was
gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest, 20
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?

Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me? — and I replied,
No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon;
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night, —
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

TO —

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art
gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

TO —

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

ONE word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it;
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not 10
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not, —
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

A LAMENT

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

O WORLD ! O life ! O time !
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood
 before;
 When will return the glory of your prime ?
 No more — oh, never more !

II

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter
 hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with
 delight
 No more — oh, never more ! 10

LINES

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered,
 The light in the dust lies dead;
 When the cloud is scattered,
 The rainbow's glory is shed;
 When the lute is broken,
 Sweet tones are remembered not;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendor
 Survive not the lamp and the lute, 10

The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute: —
 No song but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,
 Or the mournful surges
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled,
 Love first leaves the well-built nest;
 The weak one is singled
 To endure what it once possessed. 20
 O Love ! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why choose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your bier ?

IV

Its passions will rock thee,
 As the storms rock the ravens on high;
 Bright reason will mock thee,
 Like the sun from a wintry sky.
 From thy nest every rafter
 Will rot, and thine eagle home 30
 Leave thee naked to laughter,
 When leaves fall and cold winds come.

A DIRGE

[Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824]

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
 Grief too sad for song;
 Wild wind, when sullen cloud
 Knells all the night long;
 Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
 Bare woods whose branches strain,
 Deep caves and dreary main, —
 Wail, for the world's wrong.

JOHN KEATS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

[Written 1815]

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of
gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms
seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his
demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and
bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

SONNET

[Publ. 1817]

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, — to breathe
a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with hearts
content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel, — an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright ca-
reer,
He mourns that day so soon has glided
by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether si-
lently.

SONNET

[Written 1817]

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming
brain,
Before high piled books, in charactry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd
grain;
When I behold, upon the night's star'd
face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of
chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love; — then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

[Publ. 1820]

SOULS of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,

Underneath a new-old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ENDYMION

A ROMANCE

By JOHN KEATS

[Publ. 1818]

'The stretched metre of an antique song.'
Shakespeare's Sonnets.

INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY FEELING OF PRIDE AND
REGRET AND WITH 'A BOWED MIND'
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE MOST ENGLISH OF POETS EXCEPT
SHAKESPEARE,
THOMAS CHATTERTON

PREFACE

In a great nation, the work of an individual is of so little importance; his pleadings and excuses are so uninteresting; his 'way of life' such a nothing, that a Preface seems a sort of impertinent bow to strangers who care nothing about it.

A Preface, however, should be down in so many words; and such a one that by an eye-glance over the type the Reader may catch an idea of an Author's modesty, and non-opinion of himself — which I sincerely hope may be seen in the few lines I have to write, notwithstanding many proverbs of many ages old which men find a great pleasure in receiving as gospel.

About a twelvemonth since, I published a little book of verses; it was read by some dozen of my friends who lik'd it; and some dozen whom I was unacquainted with, who did not.

Now, when a dozen human beings are at words with another dozen, it becomes a matter of anxiety to side with one's friends — more especially when excited thereto by a great love of Poetry. I fought under disadvantages. Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish; and as I proceeded my steps were all uncertain. So this Poem must rather be considered as an endeavour than as a thing accomplished; a poor prologue to what, if I live, I humbly hope to do. In duty to the Public I should have kept it back for a year or two, knowing it to be so

faulty; but I really cannot do so, — by repetition my favourite passages sound vapid in my ears, and I would rather redeem myself with a new Poem should this one be found of any interest.

I have to apologize to the lovers of simplicity for touching the spell of loneliness that hung about Endymion; if any of my lines plead for me with such people I shall be proud.

It has been too much the fashion of late to consider men bigoted and addicted to every word that may chance to escape their lips; now I here declare that I have not any particular affection for any particular phrase, word, or letter in the whole affair. I have written to please myself, and in hopes to please others, and for a love of fame; if I neither please myself, nor others, nor get fame, of what consequence is Phraseology.

I would fain escape the bickerings that all works not exactly in chime bring upon their begetters — but this is not fair to expect, there must be conversation of some sort and to object shows a man's consequence. In case of a London drizzle or a Scotch mist, the following quotation from Marston may perhaps 'stead me as an umbrella for an hour or so: 'let it be the courtesy of my peruser rather to pity my self-hindering labours than to malice me.'

One word more — for we cannot help seeing our own affairs in every point of view — should any one call my dedication to Chatterton affected I answer as followeth: 'Were I dead, sir, I should like a book dedicated to me.'

TRINSMOUTH,
March 1818.

This Preface was shown either before or after it was in type to Reynolds and other friends, and Reynolds objected to it in terms which may be inferred from the following letter which Keats wrote him April 9, 1818, and which is so striking a reflection of his mind, when contemplating his finished work, that it should be read in connection with the poem: —

'Since you all agree that the thing is bad, it must be so — though I am not aware there is anything like Hunt in it (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt). Look it over again, and examine into the motives, the seeds, from which any one sentence sprung — I have not the slightest feel of humility toward the public — or to anything in existence, — but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men. When I am writing for myself for the mere sake of the moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me — but a Preface is written to the Public; a thing I cannot help looking upon as an Enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of Hostility. If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker — I would be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me — but among Multitudes of Men — I have no feel of stooping; I hate the idea of humility to them.

'I never wrote one single line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought.

'Forgive me for vexing you and making a Trojan horse of such a Trifle, both with respect to the matter in question, and myself—but it eases me to tell you—I could not live without the love of my friends—I would jump down Ætna for any great Public good—but I hate a mawkish Popularity. I cannot be subdued before them; my Glory would be to daunt and dazzle the thousand jabberers about pictures and books. I see swarms of Porcupines with their quills erect "like lime-twigs set to catch my winged book," and I would fright them away with a torch. You will say my Preface is not much of a Torch. It would have been too insulting "to begin from Jove," and I could not set a golden head upon a thing of clay. If there is any fault in the Preface it is not affection, but an undersong of disrespect to the Public. If I write another Preface, it must be without a thought of those people—I will think about it. If it should not reach you in four or five days, tell Taylor to publish it without a Preface, and let the Dedication simply stand "Inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton." The next day he wrote to his friend, inclosing a new draft: "I am anxious you should find this Preface tolerable. If there is an affectionation in it 't is natural to me. Do let the Printer's Devil cook it, and let me be as "the casing air." You are too good in this matter—were I in your state, I am certain I should have no thought but of discontent and illness—I might though be taught Patience: I had an idea of giving no Preface; however, don't you think this had better go? O, let it—one should not be too timid—of committing faults.'

The Dedication stood as Keats proposed, and the new Preface, which is as follows:

PREFACE

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms, of course, but from

the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dalled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid farewell.

Takenmouth,

April 10, 1818.

BOOK I

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing

A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd
ways

Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the
moon,

Trees old and young, sprouting a shady
boon

For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear
rills

That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose
blooms:

And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite

Haunt us till they become a cheering light
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'er-
 cast,
 They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore 't is with full happiness that I
 Will trace the story of Endymion.

The very music of the name has gone
 Into my being, and each pleasant scene
 Is growing fresh before me as the green
 Of our own valleys: so I will begin
 Now while I cannot hear the city's din; 40
 Now while the early budders are just new,
 And run in mazes of the youngest hue
 About old forests; while the willow trails
 Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
 Bring home increase of milk. And, as the
 year

Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly
 steer

My little boat, for many quiet hours,
 With streams that deepen freshly into bow-
 ers.

Many and many a verse I hope to write,
 Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and
 white, 50

Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the
 bees

Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
 I must be near the middle of my story.

O may no wintry season, bare, and hoary,
 See it half-finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
 With universal tinge of sober gold,
 Be all about me when I make an end.

And now at once, adventuresome, I send
 My herald thought into a wilderness:

There let its trumpet blow, and quickly
 dress 60

My uncertain path with green, that I may
 speed

Easily onward, through flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
 A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
 So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
 Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious
 fruits.

And it had gloomy shades, sequestered
 deep,

Where no man went; and if from shepherd's
 keep

A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost
 glens,

Never again saw he the happy pens 70

Whither his brethren, bleating with con-
 tent,

Over the hills at every nightfall went.
 Among the shepherds, 't was believed ever,
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did
 sever

From the white flock, but pass'd unworri'd
 By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
 Until it came to some unfooted plains
 Where fed the herds of Pan: aye great his
 gais

Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there
 were many,

Winding through palmy fern, and rushes
 fenny, 80

And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
 Stems thrugging all around between the
 swell

Of turf and slanting branches: who could
 tell

The freshness of the space of heaven
 above,

Edged round with dark tree-tops? through
 which a dove

Would often beat its wings, and often too
 A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
 There stood a marble altar, with a tress 90

Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
 Had taken fairy phantasies to strew

Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
 And so the dawned light in pomp receive.

For 't was the morn: Apollo's upward fire
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre

Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
 A melancholy spirit well might win

Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
 Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine 100

Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing
 sun;

The lark was lost in him; cold springs had
 run

To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
 Man's voice was on the mountains; and the
 mass

Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed ten-
 fold,

To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the
 dawn

Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
 All suddenly, with joyful ories, there sped

A troop of little children garlanded; 110
 Who gathering round the altar seem'd to pry
 Earnestly round as wishing to espy
 Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited
 For many moments, ere their ears were
 sated

With a faint breath of music, which ev'n
 then

Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.
 Within a little space again it gave
 Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
 To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes
 breaking

Through copse-clad valleys, — ere their
 death, o'ertaking 120

The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
 Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmer'd
 light

Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
 Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
 Into the widest alley they all past,
 Making directly for the woodland altar.
 O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue
 faulter

In telling of this goodly company,
 Of their old piety, and of their glee: 130
 But let a portion of ethereal dew
 Fall on my head, and presently unnew
 My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
 To stammer where old Chaucer used to
 sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced
 along,
 Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;
 Each having a white wicker, overbrimm'd
 With April's tender younglings: next, well
 trimm'd,
 A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt
 looks

As may be read of in Arcadian books; 140
 Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
 When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
 Let his divinity o'erflowing die
 In music, through the vales of Thessaly:
 Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the
 ground,

And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
 With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,
 Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
 A venerable priest full soberly,
 Begirt with minist'ring looks: alway his
 eye 150

Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
 And after him his sacred vestments swept
 From his right hand there swung a vase,
 milk-white,
 Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous
 light;

And in his left he held a basket full
 Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could
 cull:

Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
 Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill
 His aged head, crowned with beechen
 wreath,

Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth 160
 Of winter hoar. Then came another
 crowd

Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
 Their share of the ditty. After them ap-
 pear'd,

Up-follow'd by a multitude that rear'd
 Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought
 car,

Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
 The freedom of three steeds of dapple
 brown:

Who stood therein did seem of great re-
 nown

Among the throng. His youth was fully
 blown,

Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
 And, for those simple times, his garments
 were 171

A chieftain king's; beneath his breast, half
 bare,

Was hung a silver bugle, and between
 His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
 A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd
 To common lookers-on, like one who
 dream'd

Of idleness in groves Elysian:
 But there were some who feelingly could
 scan

A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
 Through his forgotten hands: then would
 they sigh, 181

And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
 Of logs piled solemnly. — Ah, well-a-day,
 Why should our young Endymion pine
 away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,
 Stood silent round the shrine: each look
 was changed

To sudden veneration: women meek

Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each
cheek

Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.
Endymion too, without a forest peer, ¹⁹⁰
Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed
face,

Among his brothers of the mountain chase.
In midst of all, the venerable priest
Eyed them with joy from greatest to the
least,

And, after lifting up his aged hands,
Thus spake he: 'Men of Latmos! shepherd
bands!

Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
Whether descended from beneath the rocks
That overtop your mountains; whether
come

From valleys where the pipe is never
dumb; ²⁰⁰

Or from your swelling downs, where sweet
air stirs

Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly
furze

Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious
charge

Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds
forlorn

By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:

Mothers and wives! who day by day pre-
pare

The scrip, with needments, for the moun-
tain air;

And all ye gentle girls who foster up
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup ²¹⁰

Will put choice honey for a favour'd youth:
Yea, every one attend! for in good truth

Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our loving heifers sleeker than

Night-swollen mushroom? Are not our
wide plains

Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not
rains

Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had

Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
The earth is glad: the merry lark has

pour'd ²²⁰
His early song against yon breezy sky,
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.'

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a
spire

Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;

Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.
Now while the earth was drinking it, and
while

Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant
pile,

And gummy frankincense was sparkling
bright

'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy
light ²³⁰

Spread grayly eastward, thus a chorus
sang:

'O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth
hang

From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life,
death

Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress

Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels
darken;

And through whole solemn hours dost sit,
and harken

The dreary melody of bedded reeds —
In desolate places, where dank moisture
breeds ²⁴⁰

The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth

Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou
now,

By thy love's milky brow!
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,

Hear us, great Pan!

'O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet,
turtles

Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myr-
tles,

What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the

side ²⁵⁰
Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to
whom

Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow-girted bees

Their golden honeycombs; our village lens
Their fairest blossom'd beans and popped

corn;
The chuckling linnet its five young un-
born,

To sing for thee; low-creeping strawber-
ries

Their summer coolness; pent-up butter-
flies

Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh-budding year

All its completions — be quickly near, 260
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,

O forester divine !

‘Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies

For willing service ; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit ;

Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle’s maw ;

Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewilder’d shepherds to their path again ;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main, 270

And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Naiads’ cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping ;

Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown

With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones brown —

By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king !

‘O Harkener to the loud-clapping shears,

While ever and anon to his shorn peers, 280
A ram goes bleating : Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn

Anger our huntsman : Breather round our farms,

To keep off mildews, and all weather harms :

Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors :

Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge — see,
Great son of Dryope, 290

The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows !

‘Be still the unimaginable lodge

For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,

That spreading in this dull and clodded earth :

Gives it a touch ethereal — a new birth :
Be still a symbol of immensity ;
A firmament reflected in a sea ; 300
An element filling the space between ;
An unknown — but no more : we humbly screen

With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,

And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,

Conjure thee to receive our humble Praa,
Upon thy Mount Lycean !’

Even while they brought their burden to a close,

A shout from the whole multitude arose,
That linger’d in the air like dying rolls
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals 310
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.

Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
Young companies nimbly began dancing
To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.

Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly
To tunes forgotten — out of memory :
Fair creatures ! whose young children’s children bred

Thermopylae its heroes — not yet dead,
But in old marbles ever beautiful.
High genitors, unconscious did they cull 320
Time’s sweet first-fruits — they danced to weariness,

And then in quiet circles did they press
The billock turf, and caught the latter end
Of some strange history, potent to send
A young mind from its bodily tenement.
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent

On either side ; pitying the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him, — Zephyr penitent.
Who now, ere Phoebus mounts the firmament, 330

Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
The archers too, upon a wider plain,
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft

Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,
Call’d up a thousand thoughts to envelope
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee

And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
 Poor, lonely Niobel when her lovely young
 Were dead and gone, and her caressing
 tongue 340

Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,
 And very, very deadliness did nip
 Her motherly cheeks. Aroused from this
 sad mood

By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,
 Uplifting his strong bow into the air,
 Many might after brighter visions stare:
 After the Argonauts, in blind amaze
 Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,
 Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
 There shot a golden splendour far and
 wide, 350

Spangling those million poutings of the
 brine

With quivering ore: 't was even an awful
 shine

From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;
 A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.
 Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,
 Might turn their steps towards the sober
 ring

Where sat Endymion and the aged priest
 'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks
 increased

The silvery setting of their mortal star.
 There they discoursed upon the fragile
 bar 360

That keeps us from our homes ethereal;
 And what our duties there to nightly
 call

Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer wea-
 ther;

To summon all the downiest clouds together
 For the sun's purple couch; to emulate
 In minist'ring the potent rule of fate
 With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations;
 To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who
 cons

Sweet poetry by moonlight: besides these,
 A world of other unguess'd offices. 370

Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
 Into Elysium; vying to rehearse
 Each one his own anticipated bliss.

One felt heart-certain that he could not
 miss

His quick-gone love, among fair blossom'd
 boughs,

Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
 Her lips with music for the welcoming.

Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,
 To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,

Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond
 vales: 380

Who, suddenly, should stoop through the
 smooth wind,

And with the balmiest leaves his temples
 bind;

And, ever after, through those regions be
 His messenger, his little Mercury.

Some were athirst in soul to see again
 Their fellow-huntsmen o'er the wide cham-
 paign

In times long past; to sit with them, and
 talk

Of all the chances in their earthly walk;
 Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores

Of happiness, to when upon the moors, 390
 Benighted, close they huddled from the
 cold,

And shared their famish'd scrips. Thus all
 out-told

Their fond imaginations, — saving him
 Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels
 dim,

Endymion: yet hourly had he striven
 To hide the cankering venom, that had
 risen

His fainting recollections. Now indeed
 His senses had swoon'd off: he did not
 heed

The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
 Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe, 400

Or anxious calls, or close of trembling
 palms,

Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms:
 But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,

Like one who on the earth had never slept.
 Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man,

Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and
 close?

Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she
 made,

And breathed a sister's sorrow to per-
 suade 410

A yielding up, a cradling on her care.

Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse

Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,
 Along a path between two little streams, —

Guarding his forehead, with her round
 elbow,

From low-grown branches, and his foot-
 steps slow

From stumbling over stumps and hillocks
small;
Until they came to where these streamlets
fall,

With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,
Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush 421
With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.
A little shallop, floating there hard by,
Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;
And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,
And dipt again, with the young couple's
weight,—

Peona guiding, through the water straight,
Towards a bowery island opposite;
Which gaining presently, she steered light
Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove, 430
Where nested was an harbour, overwove
By many a summer's silent fingering;
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring
Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
On her own couch, new made of flower
leaves,
Dried carefully on the cooler side of
sheaves
When last the sun his autumn tresses
shook, 440
And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls
took.

Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest:
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
Peona's busy hand against his lips,
And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
A patient watch over the stream that creeps
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
Held her in peace: so that a whispering
blade

Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling 450
Down in the bluebells, or a wren light
rustling
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be
heard.

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the
mind

Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined
Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled
caves,

Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
And moonlight; aye, to all the many
world 460

Of silvery enchantment! — who, upfur'd
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
But renovates and lives? — Thus, in the
bower,

Endymion was calm'd to life again.
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
He said: 'I feel this thine endearing love
All through my bosom: thou art as a dove
Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked
wings

About me; and the pearliest dew not brings
Such morning incense from the fields of
May, 470

As do those brighter drops that twinkling
stray

From those kind eyes, — the very home and
haunt

Of sisterly affection. Can I want
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such
tears?

Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears
That, any longer, I will pass my days
Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
My voice upon the mountain-heights; once
more

Make my horn parley from their foreheads
boar:

Again my trooping hounds their tongues
shall loll 480

Around the breathed boar: again I'll poll
The fair-grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow:
And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet!
And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat
My soul to keep in its resolved course.'

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad ex-
claim, 490

And took a lute, from which there pulsing
came

A lively prelude, fashioning the way
In which her voice should wander. 'T was
a lay

More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange. Surely some influ-
ence rare

Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;

For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
 The quick invisible strings, even though
 she saw 500
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
 Before the deep intoxication.
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
 Her self-possession — swung the lute aside,
 And earnestly said: 'Brother, 't is vain to
 hide
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,
 Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd
 in aught
 Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent? 510
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd
 bent,
 Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen
 Her naked limbs among the alders green;
 And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace
 Something more high perplexing in thy
 face!'

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her
 hand,
 And said, 'Art thou so pale, who wast so
 bland
 And merry in our meadows? How is this?
 Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss! —
 Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed
 more strange? 521
 Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?
 Ambition is no sluggard: 't is no prize,
 That toiling years would put within my
 grasp,
 That I have sigh'd for: with so deadly gasp
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
 So all have set my heavier grief above
 These things which happen. Rightly have
 they done:
 I, who still saw the horizontal sun
 Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of
 the world, 530
 Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
 My spear aloft, as signal for the chase —
 I, who, for very sport of heart, would
 race
 With my own steed from Araby; pluck
 down
 A vulture from his towery perching; frown
 A lion into growling, loth retire —
 To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
 And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast
 Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest

'This river does not see the naked sky,
 Till it begins to progress silverly 541
 Around the western border of the wood,
 Whence, from a certain spot, its winding
 flood
 Seems at the distance like a crescent moon'
 And in that nook, the very pride of June
 Had I been used to pass my weary eves;
 The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
 So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
 And I could witness his most kingly hour,
 When he doth tighten up the golden reins,
 And paces leisurely down amber plains 551
 His snorting four. Now when his chariot
 last
 Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
 There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
 Of sacred dittany, and poppies red:
 At which I wondered greatly, knowing well
 That but one night had wrought this flow-
 ery spell;
 And, sitting down close by, began to muse
 What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I,
 Morpheus,
 In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;
 Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook 561
 Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
 Had dipt his rod in it: such garland wealth
 Came not by common growth. Thus on I
 thought,
 Until my head was dizzy and distraught.
 Moreover, through the dancing poppies
 stole
 A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;
 And shaping visions all about my sight
 Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly
 light;
 The which became more strange, and
 strange, and dim, 570
 And then were gulfd in a tumultuous swim;
 And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
 The enchantment that afterwards befell?
 Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream
 That never tongue, although it overteem
 With mellow utterance, like a cavern
 spring,
 Could figure out and to conception bring
 All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
 Watching the zenith, where the milky way
 Among the stars in virgin splendour pours;
 And travelling my eye, until the doors 581
 Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
 I became loth and fearful to alight
 From such high soaring by a downward
 glance:

So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.

When, presently, the stars began to glide,
And faint away, before my eager view:

At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge;
And lo! from opening clouds, I saw
emerge ⁵⁹¹

The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet; she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commingle with her argent spheres did
roll

Through clear and cloudy, even when she
went

At last into a dark and vapoury tent —
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
Of planets all were in the blue again.

To commune with those orbs, once more I
raised ⁶⁰⁰

My sight right upward: but it was quite
dazed

By a bright something, sailing down apace,
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
Who from Olympus watch our destinies!

Whence that completed form of all com-
pleteness?

Whence came that high perfection of all
sweetness?

Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where,
O where

Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western
sun; ⁶¹⁰

Not — thy soft hand, fair sister! let me
shun

Such foll'ing before thee — yet she had,
Indeed, looks bright enough to make me
mad;

And they were simply gordian'd up and
braided,

Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and
orb'd brow;

The which were blended in, I know not
how,

With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faint-
est sighs,

That, when I think thereon, my spirit
clings ⁶²⁰

And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
Unto what awful power shall I call?

To what high fane? — Ah! see her hover-
ing feet,

More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely
sweet

Than those of sea-born Venus, when she
rose

From out her cradle shell. The wind out-
blows

Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;
'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million

Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed, ⁶³¹

Handfuls of daisies.' — 'Endymion, how
strange!

Dream within dream!' — 'She took an
airy range,

And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,

And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 'twas
too much;

Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one

Who dives three fathoms where the waters
run

Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon, ⁶⁴⁰
I felt upmounted in that region

Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
And eagles struggle with the buffeting
north

That balances the heavy meteor-stone; —
Felt, too, I was not fearful, nor alone,

But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous
sky.

Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying
high,

And straightway into frightful eddies
swoop'd;

Such as ay muster where gray time has
scoop'd

Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's
side: ⁶⁵⁰

There hollow sounds aroused me, and I
sigh'd

To faint once more by looking on my bliss —
I was distracted; madly did I kiss

The wooing arms which held me, and did
give

My eyes at once to death: but 'twas to
live,

To take in drafts of life from the gold
fount

Of kind and passionate looks; to count,
and count

The moments, by some greedy help that
seem'd

A second self, that each might be redeem'd
And plunder'd of its load of blessed-
ness. 660

Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dared to
preas

Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
And, at that moment, felt my body dip
Into a warmer air: a moment more,
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was
store

Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
And once, above the edges of our nest, 670
An arch face peep'd, — an Oread as I
guess'd.

'Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd
me

In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
And stare them from me? But no, like a
spark

That needs must die, although its little
beam

Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
Fell into nothing — into stupid sleep.

And so it was, until a gentle creep,
A careful moving caught my waking
ears, 680

And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
My clenched hands; — for lo! the poppies
hung

Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did
tease

With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled
adieux! — 690

Away I wander'd — all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest
shades

Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny
glades

Were full of pestilent light; out taintless
rills

Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd
gills

Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown

Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and
stirr'd

In little journeys, I beheld in it 700
A disguised demon, missioned to knit
My soul with under darkness; to entice
My stumblings down some monstrous preci-
pice:

Therefore I eager follow'd, and did curse
The disappointment. Time, that aged
nurse,

Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle
heaven!

These things, with all their comfortings, are
given

To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
Of weary life.'

Thus ended he, and both

Sat silent: for the maid was very loth 711
To answer; feeling well that breathed
words

Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as
swords

Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps
Of grasshoppers against the sun. She
weeps,

And wonders; struggles to devise some
blame;

To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness! but, for all her strife,
She could as soon have crush'd away the
life

From a sick dove. At length, to break the
pause, 720

She said with trembling chance: 'Is this
the cause?

This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!
That one who through this middle earth
should pass

Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
His name upon the harp-string, should
achieve

No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
Singing alone, and fearfully, — how the
blood

Left his young cheek; and how he used to
stray

He knew not where; and how he would say,
nay,

If any said 't was love: and yet 't was love;
What could it be but love? How a ring-
dove 731

Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path;

And how he died: and then, that love doth
scathe

The gentle hearth as northern blasts do
roses;

And then the ballad of his sad life closes
With sighs and an alas! — Endymion!
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth, — anon
Among the winds at large — that all may
hearken!

Although, before the crystal heavens
darken,

I watch and dote upon the silver lakes ⁷⁴⁰
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
The semblance of gold rocks and bright
gold sands,

Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted
straits

With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
And towers of amethyst, — would I so tease
My pleasant days, because I could not
mount

Into those regions? The Morphean fount
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
And fitful whims of sleep are made of,
streams

Into its airy channels with so subtle, ⁷⁵⁰
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
Circled a million times within the space
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a
trace,

A tinting of its quality: how light
Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're
more slight

Than the mere nothing that engenders
them!

Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
Of high and noble life with thoughts so
sick?

Why pierce high-fronted honour to the
quick

For nothing but a dream?' Hereat the
youth ⁷⁶⁰

Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth
Was in his plaited brow: yet his eyelids
Widen'd a little, as when Zephyr bids
A little breeze to creep between the fans
Of careless butterflies: amid his pains
He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
'till palatable; and a colour grew
Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful
spake.

'Peona! ever have I long'd to slake
My thirst for the world's praises: nothing
base, ⁷⁷⁰

No merely slumberous phantasm, could in-
lace

The stubborn canvas for my voyage pre-
pared —

Though now 't is tatter'd; leaving my bark
bared

And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
Wherein lies happiness? In that which
becks

Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,
Full alchemized, and free of space. Be-
hold ⁷⁸⁰

The clear religion of heaven! Fold
A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,
And soothe thy lips: hie, when the airy
stress

Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds
Æolian magic from their lucid wombs:
Then old songs waken from enclouded
tombs;

Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;
Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
Round every spot where trod Apollo's
foot; ⁷⁹⁰

Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
Where long ago a giant battle was;
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.
Feel we these things? — that moment have
we slept

Into a sort of oneness, and our state
Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
Richer entanglements, enthrallments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love and friendship, and sits
high ⁸⁰⁰

Upon the forehead of humanity.
All its more ponderous and bulky worth
Is friendship, whence there ever issues
forth

A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,
There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop
Of light, and that is love: its influence
Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,
At which we start and fret: till in the end,
Melting into its radiance, we blend, ⁸¹⁰
Mingle, and so become a part of it, —
Nor with aught else can our souls inter-
knit

So wingedly: when we combine therewith,

Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,
That men, who might have tower'd in the
van

Of all the congregated world, to fan
And winnow from the coming step of time
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime 820
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
Have been content to let occasion die,
Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listless-
ness:

For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly;
As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
And cloister'd among cool and bunched
leaves—

She sings but to her love, nor e'er con-
ceives 830

How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-
gray hood.

Just so may love, although 't is understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witness-
eth:

What I know not: but who, of men, can
tell

That flowers would bloom, or that green
fruit would swell

To melting pulp, that fish would have bright
mail,

The earth its dower of river, wood, and
vale,

The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-
stones, 839

The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

'Now, if this earthly love has power to
make

Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake
Ambition from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content; what merest
whim,

Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim
A love immortal, an immortal too.

Look not so wilder'd; for these things are
true 850

And never can be born of atomies
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-
flies,

Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,
My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
My sayings will the less obscured seem
When I have told thee how my waking
sight

Has made me scruple whether that same
night 860

Was pass'd in dreaming. Hearken, sweet
Peona!

Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
Which we should see but for these dark-
ening boughs,

Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged
brows

Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,
And meet so nearly, that with wings out-
raught,

And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
Past them, but he must brush on every
side.

Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool
cell,

Far as the slabbed margin of a well, 870
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
Right upward, through the bushes, to the
sky.

Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their
stalks set

Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
Edges them round, and they have golden
pits:

'T was there I got them, from the gaps and
slits

In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my
seat,

When all above was faint with mid-day
heat.

And there in strife no burning thoughts to
heed,

I'd bubble up the water through a reed;
So reaching back to boyhood: make me
ships 881

Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder
chips,

With leaves stuck in them; and the Nep-
tune be

Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
When lovelorn hours had left me less a
child,

I sat contemplating the figures wild
Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror
through.

Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;
So plainly character'd, no breeze would
shiver

890

The happy chance: so happy, I was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,
And, therefore, was just going; when, be-
hold!

A wonder, fair as any I have told —
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did
leap

Through the cool depth. — It moved as if
to flee —

I started up, when lo! refreshfully,
There came upon my face, in plenteous
showers,

Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and
flowers,

900

Wrapping all objects from my smother'd
sight,

Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.
Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
On the deer's tender haunches: late, and
loth,

'Tis scared away by slow returning pleas-
ure.

How sickening, how dark the dreadful
leisure

910

Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
By a foreknowledge of unslumbrous night!
Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:
And a whole age of lingering moments
crept

Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.

Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment
seen;

Once more been tortured with renewed life.
When last the wintry gusts gave over
strife

920

With the conquering sun of spring, and
left the skies

Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd
eyes

In pity of the shatter'd infant buds, —
That time thou didst adorn, with amber
studs,

My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and
smiled,

Chatted with thee, and many days exiled
All torment from my breast; — 't was even
then,

Straying about, yet coop'd up in the den
Of helpless discontent, — hurling my lance
From place to place, and following at
chance,

930

At last, by hap, through some young trees
it struck,

And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck
In the middle of a brook, — whose silver
ramble

Down twenty little falls through reeds and
bramble,

Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,
Whence it ran brightly forth, and white
did lave

The nether sides of mossy stones and
rock, —

'Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to
mock

Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and
spread

940

Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's
home.

"Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam!"
Said I, low-voiced: "Ah, whither! 'Tis the
grot

Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
Doth her resign; and where her tender
hands

She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:
Or 't is the cell of Echo, where she sits,
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone
Of sadness. O that she would take my
vows,

951

And breathe them sighingly among the
boughs,

To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their
bed,

And weave them dyingly — send honey-
whispers

Round every leaf, that all those gentle
lispers

May sigh my love unto her pitying!
O charitable Echo! hear, and sing

This ditty to her! — tell her" — So I stay'd
My foolish tongue, and listening, half
afraid,

960

Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
And blushing for the freaks of melancholy

Salt tears were coming, when I heard my
name
Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents
came:
"Endymion! the cave is secreter
Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall
stir
No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light
noise
Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling
cloys
And trembles through my labyrinthine
hair."
At that oppress'd, I hurried in. — Ah!
where 970
Are those swift moments? Whither are
they fled?
I'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed
Sorrow, the way to death; but patiently
Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;
And come instead demurest meditation,
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.
No more will I count over, link by link,
My chain of grief: no longer strive to find
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind 980
Blustering about my ears: aye, thou shalt
see,
Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;
What a calm round of hours shall make my
days.
There is a paly flame of hope that plays
Where'er I look: but yet, I'll say 't is
naught —
And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
Already, a more healthy countenance?
By this the sun is setting; we may chance
Meet some of our near-dwellers with my
car.'
This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a
star 990
Through autumn mists, and took Peona's
hand:
They stept into the boat, and launch'd from
land.

FANCY

[Publ. 1820]

EVER let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let wings! Fancy wander

Through the thought still spread beyond
her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 20
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled 20
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy, high-commission'd: — send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost; 30
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it: — thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear; 40
Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment — hark!
'T is the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst; 50
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see

Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
 When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarin;
 Acorns ripe down-pattering
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Every thing is spoilt by use;
 Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gazed at? Where 's the maid
 Whose lip mature is ever new?
 Where 's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary? Where 's the face
 One would meet in every place?
 Where 's the voice, however soft,
 One would hear so very oft?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, winged Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind:
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide;
 With a waste and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid. — Break the meah
 Of the Fancy's silken leash;
 Quickly break her prison-string,
 And such joys as these she 'll bring. —
 Let the winged Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

ODE

[Publ. 1820]

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon;
 With the noise of fountains wond'rous
 And the parle of voices thund'rous;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,

60 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got
 Perfume which on earth is not;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth;
 Philosophic numbers smooth;
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week;
 Of their sorrows and delights;
 Of their passions and their spites;
 Of their glory and their shame;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day,
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new!

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

[Publ. 1820]

I

ST. AGNES' EVE — Ah, bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limp'd trembling through the
 frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while
 he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censor old,
 Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without
 a death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
 prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy
 man;
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
 knees,

And back returneth, meagre, barefoot,
 wan,
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
 The sculptured dead, on each side, seem
 to freeze,
 Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
 To think how they may ache in icy hoods
 and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little
 door,
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's
 golden tongue²⁰
 Flatter'd to tears this aged man and
 poor;
 But no — already had his death-bell
 rung;
 The joys of all his life were said and
 sung:
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes'
 Eve:
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's re-
 prieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners'
 sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the pre-
 lude soft;
 And so it chanced, for many a door was
 wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to
 chide:³¹
 The level chambers, ready with their
 pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand
 guests:
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Stared, where upon their heads the cor-
 nice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-
 wise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting fairly
 The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with
 triumphs gay⁴⁰
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,

And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady
 there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that win-
 try day,
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly
 care,
 As she had heard old dames full many
 times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes'
 Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of de-
 light,
 And soft adorings from their loves re-
 ceive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright;⁵⁰
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily
 white;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but re-
 quire
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that
 they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Made-
 line:
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes
 divine,
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping
 train
 Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retired; not cool'd by high dis-
 dain,⁶¹
 But she saw not: her heart was other-
 where;
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest
 of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless
 eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and
 short:
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she
 sighs
 Amid the timbrela, and the throng'd
 resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and
 scorn,

Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs un-
 shorn, ⁷¹
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow
 morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the
 moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart
 on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he,
 and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all un-
 seen; ⁸⁰
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in
 sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper
 tell:
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous
 citadel:
 For him, those chambers held barbarian
 hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage: not one breast af-
 fords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in
 soul. ⁹⁰

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature
 came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's
 flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus
 bland:
 He startled her; but soon she knew his
 face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied
 hand,
 Saying, 'Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from
 this place;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-
 thirsty race!

XII

Get hence! get hence! there's dwarf-
 ish Hildebrand; ¹⁰⁰
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house
 and land:
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not
 a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs—Alas
 me! flit!
 Flit like a ghost away.'—'Ah, Gossip
 dear,
 We're safe enough; here in this arm-
 chair sit,
 And tell me how'—'Good Saints! not
 here, not here;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will
 be thy bier.'

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arebed way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty
 plume; ¹¹⁰
 And as she mutter'd 'Well-a—well-a-
 day!'
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 'Now tell me where is Madeline,' said
 he,
 'O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
 Which none but secret sisterhood may
 see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving
 piously.'

XIV

'St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
 Yet men will murder upon holy days:
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and
 Fays, ¹²¹
 To venture so: it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes'
 Eve!
 God's help! my lady fair the conjuror
 plays
 This very night: good angels her de-
 ceive!
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time
 to grieve.'

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth
 look,

Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-
 book, ¹³⁰
 As spectacled she sits in chimney-nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when
 she told
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could
 brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchant-
 ments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown
 rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained
 heart
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame
 start:
 'A cruel man and impious thou art: ¹⁴⁰
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and
 dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I
 deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou
 didst seem.'

XVII

'I will not harm her, by all saints I
 swear,'
 Quoth Porphyro: 'O may I ne'er find
 grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its
 last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her
 face:
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
 Or I will, even in a moment's space, ¹⁵¹
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's
 ears,
 And beard them, though they be more
 fang'd than wolves and bears.'

XVIII

'Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble
 soul?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard
 thing,
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight
 toll;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and
 evening,

Were never miss'd.' Thus plaining, doth
 she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, ¹⁶⁰
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or
 woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there
 hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless
 bride,
 While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleep-
 eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met,
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the mon-
 strous debt. ¹⁷¹

XX

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the
 Dame:
 'All cates and dainties shall be stored
 there
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the tam-
 bour frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to
 spare,
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience;
 kneel in prayer
 The while: Ah! thou must needs the
 lady wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among
 the dead.' ¹⁸⁰

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
 The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in
 his ear
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd
 and chaste;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased
 amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in
 her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair, ¹⁹¹
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed
 maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip
 led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove
 fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine,
 died: ²⁰⁰
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should
 swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in
 her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple arch'd there
 was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of
 knot-grass, ²¹⁰
 And diamonded with panes of quaint de-
 vice,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd
 wings;
 And in the midsts, 'mong thousand her-
 aldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazon-
 ings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of
 queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry
 moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair
 breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace
 and boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together
 preat, ²²⁰

And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven: — Porphyro
 grew faint;
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from
 mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vesper
 done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she
 frees;
 Unclasps her warm jewels one by one;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her
 knees: ²³⁰
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-
 weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and
 sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm
 is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly
 nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she
 lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep op-
 press'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued
 away;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-
 day;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and
 pain; ²⁴⁰
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Pay-
 nims pray;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from
 rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bad
 again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it
 chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
 Which when he heard, that minute did
 he bless,
 And breathed himself: then from the
 closet crept, ²⁴⁹

Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, slept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!
— how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded
moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw
thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and
jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying
tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise
is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and laven-
der'd,
While he from forth the closet brought
a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and
gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy
curd,
And incient syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every
one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Leba-
non.

XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing
hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they
stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume
light.—
'And now, my love, my seraph fair,
awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine ere-
mite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes'
sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul
doth ache.'

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved
arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her
dream
By the dusk curtains:—'t was a mid-
night charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight
gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phan-
tasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow
lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that ten-
derest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since
mute,
In Provence call'd 'La belle dame sans
mercy':
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft
moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and
suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-
sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that night
expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and
deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many
a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would
keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous
eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so
dreamingly.

XXXV

'Ah, Porphyro!' said she, 'but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine
ear,

Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and
clear:

How changed thou art! how pallid, chill,
and drear!

Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complain-
ings dear!

Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not
where to go.'

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing
star

Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep re-
pose;

Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet, —
Solution sweet: meautime the frost-wind
blows

Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp
sleet

Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon
hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-
blown sleet:

'This is no dream, my bride, my Made-
line!'

'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and
beat:

'No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and
pine. —

Cruel! what traitor could thee hither
bring?

I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsookest a deceived thing; —
dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned
wing.'

XXXVIII

'My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely
bride!

Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and
vermeil dyed?

Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my
rest

After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim, — saved by miracle.

Though I have found, I will not rob thy
nest

Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st
well

To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

'Hark! 't is an elfin storm from faery
land,

Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise — arise! the morning is at hand: —

The bloated wassailers will never heed: —
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;

There are no ears to hear, or eyes to
see, —

Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy
mead:

Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home
for thee.'

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all
around,

At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
spears —

Down the wide stairs a darkling way
they found. —

In all the house was heard no human
sound.

A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by
each door;

The arras, rich with horseman, hawk,
and hound,

Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty
floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide
hall;

Like phantoms to the iron porch they
glide,

Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook
his hide,

But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy
slide: —

The chains lie silent on the footworn
stones; —

The key turns, and the door upon its hinges
groans.

XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long
ago³⁷⁰
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a
woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade
and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-
worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the
old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face
deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes
cold.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

[Publ. 1820]

I

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow
Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our
rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy
shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? what
maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to es-
cape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild
ecstasy?¹⁰

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those un-
heard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes,
play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more en-
dear'd
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst
not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be
bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou
kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do
not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou has not
thy bliss,¹⁹
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot
shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring
adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy
love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and
cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching
tongue.³⁰

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the
skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands
drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious
morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er re-
turn.⁴⁰

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of
thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other
woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom
thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is
all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
know.⁵⁰

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

[Publ. 1820]

I

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew; 10
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing 20
A faery's song.

VI

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said —
'I love thee true.'

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed, and sighed deep, 30
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
So kiss'd to sleep.

IX

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd — Ah! woe betide!

The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!' 40

XI

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

[Publ. 1819]

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness
pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had
drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had
sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness, —
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the
trees,

In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows number-
less,
Singest of summer in full-throated
ease. 20

II

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long ago in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-
burnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the
brim,
And purple-stained mouth;

That I might drink, and leave the world
unseen,
And with thee fade away into the for-
est dim: 20

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never
known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other
groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray
hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-
thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of
sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous
eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-
morrow. 30

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and re-
tards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her
throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry
Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes
blown
Through verdurous glooms and wind-
ing mossy ways. 40

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each
sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree
wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglan-
tine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in
leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy
wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on sum-
mer eves. 50

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful
Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused
rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no
pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul
abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears
in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal
Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was
heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a
path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when,
sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on
the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands for-
lorn. 70

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole
self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still
stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried
deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: — do I wake or
sleep? 80

LAMIA

[Publ. 1820]

PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,

Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cow-slipp'd lawns,

The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft;

From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight¹⁰

Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.

For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons
poured

Pearls, while on land they wither'd and
adored.

Fast by the springs where she to bathe was
wont,

And in those meads where sometimes she
might haunt,

Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any
Muse,

Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to
choose.²⁰

Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders
bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood,
he flew,

Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared
her secret bed:³⁰

In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere
be found,

And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.

There as he stood, he heard a mournful
voice,

Such as once heard, in gentle heart, de-
stroys

All pain but pity: thus the lone voice
spake:

'When from this wreathed tomb shall I
awake!

When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy
strife

Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!'
The God, dove-footed, glided silently

Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his
speed,

The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,

Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky
brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she
breathed,³⁵

Dissolved, or brighter shone, or inter-
wreathed

Their lustres with the gloomier tapes-
tries—

So rainbow-aided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady
elf,

Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire

Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!

She had a woman's mouth with all its
pearls complete:⁴⁰

And for her eyes—what could such eyes
do there

But weep, and weep, that they were born
so fair?

As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian
air.

Her throat was serpent, but the words she
spake

Came, as through bubbling honey, for
Love's sake,

And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey:

'Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers,
fluttering light,

I had a splendid dream of thee last night:

I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, 70
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting
clear,

Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long
melodious moan.

I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as
morning breaks,

And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou
art!

Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the
maid? 80

Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
'Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-
inspired!

Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy
eyes,

Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—
Where she doth breathe!' 'Bright planet,
thou hast said,'

Return'd the snake, 'but seal with oaths,
fair God!'

'I swear,' said Hermes, 'by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry
crown!' 90

Light flew his earnest words, among the
blossoms blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
'Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of
thine,

Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant
days

She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet;
From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches
green,

She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes un-
seen:

And by my power is her beauty veil'd 100
To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bade her steep
Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.

Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone
If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my
boon!'

Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears it
ran

Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lipping
said,

'I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charining as before.
I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me
where he is. 120

Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy
brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even
now.'

The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was
seen

Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling
on the green.

It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly
pass

Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it
might seem

Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he
burn'd; 130

Then, lighting on the printless verdure,
turn'd

To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid
arm,

Delicate, pnt to proof the lithe Caducean
charm.

So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her step: she, like a moon in
wane,

Faded before him, cower'd, nor could re-
strain

Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd
bland,

And, like new flowers at morning song of
bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the
lees.

Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, there-
with besprent,

Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and auguish
drear, 150

Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all
sear,

Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without
one cooling tear.

The colours all inflamed throughout her
train,

She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet
pain:

A deep volcanic yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede:
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks
and bars,

Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her
stars: 160

So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,

Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still above her crown; that vanish'd, also
she

Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, 'Lycius! gentle Lycius!'—Borne
aloft

With the bright mists about the mountains
hoar

These words dissolved: Crete's forests
heard no more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?

She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore:
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Persian rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy
rack,

South-westward to Cleone. There she
stood 179

About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passion'd
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered
lea

Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's
core: 190

Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bias from its neighbour
pain;

Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counter-
change;

Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dis-
part

Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unabest
And kept his rosy terms in idle languish-
ment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly
By the wayside to linger, we shall see; 201
But first 't is fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-
house,

Of all she list, strange or magnificent:
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit
went;

Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Ne-
reids fair

Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly
stair;

Or where God Bacchus drains his cups di-
vine,

Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous
pine; 210

Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzas
line.

And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming
thus,

She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm unseager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him. 219

Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she
knew,

To Corinth from the shore; for freshly
blew

The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen
prow

In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been
awhile

To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood
and incense rare.

Jove heard his vows, and better'd his de-
sire:

For by some freakful chance he made re-
tire ²³⁰

From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth
talk:

Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star ap-
pear'd

His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more
near—

Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen ²⁴⁰
She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her
eyes

Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
Turn'd—syllabbling thus, 'Ah, Lycius
bright!

And will you leave me on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown.'
He did; not with cold wonder fearfully,
But Orphens-like at an Eurydice;
For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seem'd he had loved them a whole sum-
mer long: ²⁵⁰

And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lips had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore;
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his
chain so sure:

'Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, God-
dessa, see

Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
For pity do not this sad heart belie—
Even as thou vanishest so I shall die. ²⁶⁰
Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:
Stay! though the greenest woods be thy
domain,

Alone they can drink up the morning rain:
Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou
shouldst fade,

Thy memory will waste me to a shade:—
For pity do not melt!'—'If I should
stay,' ²⁷¹

Said Lamia, 'here, upon this floor of clay,
And pain my steps upon these flowers too
rough,

What canst thou say or do of charm enough
To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to
roam

Over these hills and vales, where no joy
is,—

Empty of immortality and bliss!
Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
That finer spirits cannot breathe below ²⁸⁰
In human climes, and live: Alas! poor
youth,

What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
My essence? What serener palaces,
Where I may all my many senses please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts
appease?

It cannot be—Adieu!' So said, she rose
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to
lose

The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon'd murmuring of love, and pale with
pain.

The cruel lady, without any show ²⁹⁰
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every
thing,

A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in
their panting fires. ³⁰⁰

And then she whisper'd in such trembling
tone,

As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd
days,

Use other speech than looks; bidding him
raise

His drooping head, and clear his soul of
doubt,

For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-
same pains

Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could
miss 310

Her face so long in Corinth, where, she
said,
She dwelt but half retired, and there had
led

Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he leant thought-
fully

At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets
heap'd

Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 't was the night before
The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no
more, 320

But wept alone those days, for why should
she adore?

Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
And every word she spake enticed him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them
all, 330

Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged
aright,

That Lycius could not love in half a fright.
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty
gave,

That, while it smote, still guaranteed to
save.

Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh:
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her
sweet,

If 't was too far that night for her soft
feet.

The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness

Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised:
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not
how,

So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples
lewd,

Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance
brew'd,

To the wide-spreaded night above her
towers.

Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool
hours,

Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement
white,

Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festi-
vals,

And threw their moving shadows on the
walls,

Or found them cluster'd in the corniced
shade 360

Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky
colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in
fear,

Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came
near

With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and
smooth bald crown,

Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic
gown:

Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,

While hurried Lamia trembled: 'Ah,' said
he,

'Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
Why does your tender palm dissolve in
dew?' — 370

'I'm wearied,' said fair Lamia: 'tell me
who

Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
His features: — Lycius! wherefore did you
blind

Yourself from his quick eyes?' Lycius
replied,

'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to-night he seems

The ghost of folly haunting my sweet
dreams.'

While yet he spake they had arrived
before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor
glow 380
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water; for so new
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet
divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds
Æolian
Breathed from the hinges, as the ample
span
Of the wide doors disclosed a place un-
known
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same
year 390
Were seen about the markets: none knew
where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to
their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards
befell,
'T would humour many a heart to leave
them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incred-
ulous.

PART II

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is — Love, forgive us! — cinders, ashes,
dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's
fast: —
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh
frown,
Or elench'd it quite: but too short was
their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the
soft voice hiss. 40
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful
roar,

Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon
the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear 20
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts: — there they
reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids
closed,
Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they
almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a
thrill
Of trumpets — Lycius started — the sounds
fled,
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbour'd
in 30
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's
passing bell.
'Why do you sigh, fair creature?' whis-
per'd he: 40
'Why do you think?' return'd she ten-
derly:
'You have deserted me; — where am I
now?
Not in your heart while care weighs on
your brow:
No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
From your breast houseless: aye, it must be
so.'
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,
'My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart 50
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth yon there,
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?

Aye, a sweet kiss — you see your mighty woes.

My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!

What mortal hath a prize, that other men
May be confounded and abash'd withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,

And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice to
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,

While through the thronged streets your
bridal car

Wheels round its dazzling spokes.' — The
lady's cheek

Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and
meek,

Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she
wrung,

To change his purpose. He thereat was
stung,

Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim ⁷⁰
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 't was possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to
swell.

Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike
The serpent — Ha! the serpent! certes, ⁸⁰
she

Was none. She burnt, she loved the
tyranny,

And, all subdued, consented to the hour
When to the bridal he should lead his par-
amour.

Whispering in midnight silence, said the
youth,

'Sure some sweet name thou hast, though,
by my truth,

I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth,
To share our marriage feast and nuptial
mirth?' ⁹¹

'I have no friends,' said Lamia, 'no, not
one;

My presence in wide Corinth hardly knows:
My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
Sepulchred, where no kindled incense
burns,

Seeing all their luckless race are dead,
save me,

And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
Even as you list invite your many guests;
But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
With any pleasure on me, do not bid ¹⁰⁰
Old Apollonius — from him keep me hid.'
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and
blank,

Made close inquiry; from whose touch she
shrank,

Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of
day,

Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage
song,

With other pageants: but this fair un-
known ¹¹⁰

Had not a friend. So being left alone,
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin.)
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompous-
ness,

She set herself, high-thoughted, how to
dress

The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 't is doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.

About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short
space ¹²⁰

The glowing banquet-room shone with
wide-arched grace.

A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm
might fade.

Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side.
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:
Two palms and then two plantains, and
so on,

From either side their stems branch'd one
to one

All down the aisled place; and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on
from wall to wall. ¹³¹

So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and
niche.

Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at
first,

Came jasper panels; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of alighter trees, ¹⁴⁰
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.

Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd
and still,

Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil
her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip
rout.

O senseless Lyeius! Madman! wherefore
flout

The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd
hours,

And show to common eyes these secret
bowers?

The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy
brain, ¹⁵⁰

Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And enter'd marvelling: for they knew the
street,

Remember'd it from childhood all complete

Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demeane;

So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and
keen:

Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,

And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere:

'Twas Apollonius: something too he
laugh'd,

As though some knotty problem, that had
daft ¹⁶⁰

His patient thought, had now begun to
thaw,

And solve and melt:—'t was just as he
foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. 'Tis no common rule,

Lycius,' said he, 'for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright
throng

Of younger friends; yet must I do this
wrong,

And you forgive me.' Lycius blush'd, and
led

The old man through the inner doors broad-
spread; ¹⁷⁰

With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's
spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:

Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the
soft

Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of
smoke

From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimic'd as they
rose ¹⁸¹

Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds
odorous.

Twelve spher'd tables, by silk seats in-
spher'd,

High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice
told

Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry
shine.

Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a
God. ¹⁹⁰

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure
press'd,

By ministering slaves, upon his hands and
feet,

And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the
feast

In white robes, and themselves in order
placed

Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of
wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing
low 201

At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;
But when the happy vintage touch'd their
brains,

Louder they talk, and louder come the
strains

Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous
dyes,

The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy
deed,

And every soul from human trammels
freed, 210

No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet
wine,

Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too
divine.

Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes
double bright:

Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees
branch-rent,

In baskets of bright osier'd gold were
brought

High as the handles heap'd, to suit the
thought

Of every guest: that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at
his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?

What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for
him

The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may
swim

Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle
wage

War on his temples. Do not all charms
fly

At the mere touch of cold philosophy? 230
There was an awful rainbow once in
heaven:

We know her woof, her texture; she is
given

In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a
shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face, 240
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he
took

Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a
look

'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled counte-
nance,

And pledge him. The bald-head philos-
opher

Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or
stir,

Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride.
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling
her sweet pride.

Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout
touch,

As pale it lay upon the rosy couch: 250
'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his
veins;

Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.

'Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost
thou start?

Know'st thou that man?' Poor Lamia an-
swer'd not.

He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gazed: his human senses
reel:

Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs:
There was no recognition in those orbs. 260
'Lamia!' he cried—and no soft-toned re-
ply.

The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush: the stately music no more
breathes;

The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure
ceased;

A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his
hair.

'Lamia!' he shriek'd; and nothing but
the shriek

With its sad echo did the silence break. 270
 'Begone, foul dream!' he cried, gazing
 again

In the bride's face, where now no azure
 vein

Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft
 bloom

Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine
 The deep-recessed vision: — all was blight;
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly
 white.

'Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruth-
 less man!

Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous
 ban

Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
 Here represent their shadowy presences,
 May pierce them on the sudden with the
 thorn 281

Of painful blindness; leaving thee for-
 lorn,

In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
 Of conscience, for their long-offended might,
 For all thine impious proud-heart sophis-
 tries,

Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
 Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard
 wretch!

Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids
 stretch

Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
 My sweet bride withers at their potency.' 290

'Fool!' said the sophist, in an under-tone
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nigh-
 ting moan

From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and
 lost,

He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 'Fool! Fool!' repeated he, while his eyes
 still

Relented not, nor moved; 'from every
 ill

Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
 And shall I see thee made a serpent's

prey?'

Then Lamia breathed death breath; the
 sophist's eye,

Like a sharp spear, went through her ut-
 terly, 300

Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging: she, as
 well

As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,

He look'd and look'd again a level — No!
 'A serpent!' echoed he; no sooner said,

Than with a frightful scream she van-
 ished:

And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same
 night.

On the high couch he lay! — his friends
 came round —

Supported him — no pulse or breath they
 found, 310

And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body
 wound.

TO AUTUMN

[Publ. 1820]

I

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the
 thatch-eaves run;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-
 trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the
 core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the
 hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding
 more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never

cease, 10

For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their
 clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may

find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing

wind;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while

thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its
 twined flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost
 keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last oozings, hours
 by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay
where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music
too, —

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying
day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy
hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats
mourn

Among the river shallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or
dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from
hilly bourn;

Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble
soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden-
croft,

And gathering swallows twitter in the
skies.

THE LAST SONNET

[Written 1820]

BRIGHT star, would I were steadfast as
thou art!

Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,

Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human
shores

Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the
moors:

No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening

breast,

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

REQUIESCAT

[Publ. 1849]

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew:
In quiet she reposes;
Ah! would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound; 10
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath;
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

RESIGNATION

TO FAUSTA

[Publ. 1849]

*To die be given us, or attained!
Fierce work it were, to do again.*

So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, prayed
At burning noon; so warriors said,
Scarfed with the cross, who watched the
miles
Of dust which wreathed their struggling
files
Down Lydian mountains; so, when snows
Round Alpine summits, eddying rose,
The Goth, bound Rome-wards; so the Hun,
Crouched on his saddle, while the sun 10
Went lurid down o'er flooded plains
Through which the groaning Danube strains
To the drear Euxine: so pray all,

Whom labors, self-ordained, intrall;
Because they to themselves propose
On this side the all-common close
A goal which, gained, may give repose.
So pray they; and to stand again
Where they stood once, to them were pain;
Pain to thread back and to renew 20
Past straits, and currents long steered
through.

But milder natures, and more free, —
Whom an unblamed serenity
Hath freed from passions, and the state
Of struggle these necessitate;
Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
Hath made, or birth hath found, resigned, —
These mourn not, that their goings pay
Obedience to the passing day.
These claim not every laughing hour 30
For handmaid to their striding power;
Each in her turn, with torch upreared,
To await their march; and when appeared,
Through the cold gloom, with measured
race,

To usher for a destined space
(Her own sweet errands all foregone)
The too imperious traveller on.
These, Fausta, ask not this; nor thou,
Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now!

We left just ten years since, you say, 4
That wayside inn we left to-day.
Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
Shouts greeting from his easy-chair.
High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands,
Makes clear our goal to every eye, —
The valley's western boundary.
A gate swings to! our tide hath flowed
Already from the silent road.
The valley-pastures, one by one, 50
Are threaded, quiet in the sun;
And now, beyond the rude stone bridge,
Slopes gracious up the western ridge.
Its woody border, and the last
Of its dark upland farms, is past;
Cool farms, with open-lying stores,

Under their burnished sycamores, —
 All past! and through the trees we glide
 Emerging on the green hillside.
 There climbing hangs, a far-seen sign, 60
 Our wavering, many-colored line;
 There winds, up-streaming slowly still
 Over the summit of the hill.
 And now, in front, behold outspread
 Those upper regions we must tread, —
 Mild hollows, and clear heathy swells,
 The cheerful silence of the fells.
 Some two hours' march, with serious air,
 Through the deep noontide heats we fare;
 The red-grouse, springing at our sound, 70
 Skims, now and then, the shining ground;
 No life, save his and ours, intrudes
 Upon these breathless solitudes.
 Oh, joy! again the farms appear.
 Cool shade is there, and rustic cheer;
 There springs the brook will guide us down,
 Bright comrade, to the noisy town.
 Lingering, we follow down; we gain
 The town, the highway, and the plain.
 And many a mile of dusty way, 80
 Parched and road-worn, we made that day;
 But, Fausta, I remember well,
 That as the balmy darkness fell,
 We bathed our hands with speechless glee,
 That night, in the wide-glimmering sea.

Once more we tread this self-same road,
 Fausta, which ten years since we trod;
 Alone we tread it, you and I,
 Ghosts of that boisterous company.
 Here, where the brook shines, near its head,
 In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed; 90
 Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
 Capped with faint smoke, the noisy town, —
 Here sit we, and again unroll,
 Though slowly, the familiar whole.
 The solemn wastes of heathy hill
 Sleep in the July sunshine still;
 The self-same shadows now, as then;
 Play through this glassy upland glen;
 The loose dark stones on the green way 100
 Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay;
 On this mild bank above the stream,
 (You crush them!) the blue gentians gleam.
 Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
 The sailing foam, the shining pool!
 These are not changed; and we, you say,
 Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they.

The gypsies, whom we met below,
 They too have long roamed to and fro;

They ramble, leaving, where they pass, 110
 Their fragments on the cumbered grass.
 And often to some kindly place
 Chance guides the migratory race,
 Where, though long wanderings intervene,
 They recognize a former scene.
 The dingy tents are pitched; the fires
 Give to the wind their wavering spires;
 In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
 Their children, as when first they came;
 They see their shackled beasts again 120
 Move, browsing, up the gray-walled lane.
 Signs are not wanting, which might raise
 The ghost in them of former days, —
 Signs are not wanting, if they would;
 Suggestions to disquietude.
 For them, for all, time's busy touch,
 While it mends little, troubles much.
 Their joints grow stiffer — but the year
 Runs his old round of dubious cheer;
 Chilly they grow — yet winds in March, 130
 Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch;
 They must live still — and yet, God knows,
 Crowded and keen the country grows;
 It seems as if, in their decay,
 The law grew stronger every day.
 So might they reason, so compare,
 Fausta, times past with times that are;
 But no! they rubbed through yesterday
 In their hereditary way,
 And they will rub through, if they can, 140
 To-morrow on the self-same plan,
 Till death arrive to supersede,
 For them, vicissitude and need.

The poet, to whose mighty heart
 Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
 Subdues that energy to scan
 Not his own course, but that of man.
 Though he move mountains, though his day
 Be passed on the proud heights of sway,
 Though he hath loosed a thousand chains,
 Though he hath borne immortal pains, 150
 Action and suffering though he know, —
 He hath not lived, if he lives so.
 He sees, in some great-historied land,
 A ruler of the people stand,
 Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
 Roll through the heaving multitude,
 Exults — yet for no moment's space
 Envy the all-regarded place.
 Beautiful eyes meet his, and he 160
 Bears to admire uncravingly;
 They pass: he, mingled with the crowd,
 Is in their far-off triumphs proud.

From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town;
Surveys each happy group which fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets, —
Each with some errand of its own, —
And does not say, *I am alone.*

He sees the gentle stir of birth 170
When morning purifies the earth;
He leans upon a gate, and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees.
Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answered from the depth of dawn;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drenched, half-shut roses gleam.
But, where the farther side slopes down,
He sees the drowsy new-waked clown 181
In his white quaint-embroidered frock
Make, whistling, toward his mist-wreathed
flock,

Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
The wet, flowered grass heaves up its
head.

Leaned on his gate, he gazes: tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll, 190
A placid and continuous whole, —
That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
That life, whose dumb wish is not missed
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
The life he craves — if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul.

You listen; but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while ! 200
Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Washed, eddying, from this bank, their
home.

*Those gypsies — so your thoughts I scan —
Are less, the poet more, than man.
They feel not, though they move and see.
Deeper the poet feels ; but he
Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
Where Orpheus and where Homer are.
In the day's life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound ; 210
He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
And flees the common life of men.
He escapes thence, but we abide.
Not deep the poet sees, but wide.*

The world in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy; and, were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismayed, 220
Beyond his passion's widest range,
Far regions of eternal change.
Nay, and since death, which wipes out
man,

Finds him with many an unsolved plan,
With much unknown, and much untried,
Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
Still gazing on the ever full
Eternal mundane spectacle, —
This world in which we draw our breath,
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death. 230

Blame thou not, therefore, him who
dares

Judge vain beforehand human cares;
Whose natural insight can discern
What through experience others learn;
Who needs not love and power, to know
Love transient, power an unreal show;
Who treads at ease life's uncheered ways:
Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise !
Rather thyself for some aim pray,
Nobler than this, to fill the day; 240
Rather that heart, which burns in thee,
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free;
Be passionate hopes not ill resigned
For quiet, and a fearless mind.
And though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet's rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquered fate.
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men's business not too near, 250
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homeward to the general life.
Like leaves by suns not yet uncured;
To the wise, foolish; to the world,
Weak: yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
To whom each moment in its race,
Crowd as we will its neutral space,
Is but a quiet watershed
Whence, equally, the seas of life and death
are fed. 260

Enough, we live ! and if a life
With large results so little rife,
Though bearable, seem hardly worth
This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth;
Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,

The solemn hills around us spread,
 This stream which falls incessantly,
 The strange-scrawled rocks, the lonely sky,
 If I might lend their life a voice, 270
 Seem to bear rather than rejoice.
 And even could the intemperate prayer
 Man iterates, while these forbear,
 For movement, for an ampler sphere,
 Pierce Fate's impenetrable ear;
 Not milder is the general lot
 Because our spirits have forgot,
 In action's dizzying eddy whirled,
 The something that infects the world.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

[Publ. 1853]

AND the first gray of morning filled the east,
 And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
 But all the Tartar camp along the stream
 Was hushed, and still the men were plunged
 in sleep.

Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
 He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed:
 But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
 He rose, and clad himself, and girt his
 sword,

And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
 And went abroad into the cold wet fog, 30
 Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he passed,
 which stood
 Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat
 strand

Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
 When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;

Through the black tents he passed, o'er
 that low strand,

And to a hillock came, a little back
 From the stream's brink, — the spot where
 first a boat,

Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the
 land.

The men of former times had crowned the
 top 20

With a clay fort; but that was fallen, and
 now

The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
 A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were
 spread.

And Sohrab came there, and went in, and
 stood

Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
 And found the old man sleeping on his bed
 Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his
 arms.

And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the
 step

Was dulled; for he slept light, an old man's
 sleep;

And he rose quickly on one arm, and
 said, — 30

"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear
 dawn.

Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"

But Sohrab came to the bedside, and
 said, —

"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
 The sun has not yet risen, and the foe
 Sleep: but I sleep not; all night long I lie
 Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
 For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
 Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
 In Samarcand, before the army marched; 40
 And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
 Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan
 first

I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
 I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
 At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
 This too thou know'st, that while I still
 bear on

The conquering Tartar ensigns through the
 world,

And beat the Persians back on every field,
 I seek one man, one man, and one alone, —
 Rustum, my father; who I hoped should
 greet, 50

Should one day greet, upon some well-
 fought field,

His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
 So I long hoped, but him I never find.
 Come then, hear now, and grant me what I
 ask.

Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
 Will challenge forth the bravest Persian
 lords

To meet me, man to man: if I prevail,
 Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
 Old man, the dead need no one, claim no
 kin.

Dim is the rumor of a common fight, 60

Where host meets host, and many names
are sunk;

But of a single combat fame speaks clear."

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and
said,—

"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar
chiefs,

And share the battle's common chance with
us

Who love thee, but must press forever
first,

In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen? 70

That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's
towns.

But if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through
fight!

Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!

But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young, 79

When Rustum was in front of every fray:
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old;

Whether that his own mighty strength at
last

Feels the abhorred approaches of old age;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian king.
There go! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart
forebodes

Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well,
though lost

To us; fain therefore send thee hence in
peace 89

To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain. But who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's
son?

Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand,
and left

His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he
took 98

In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-Kul;

And raised the curtain of his tent, and
called

His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun by this had risen, and cleared
the fog

From the broad Oxus and the glittering
sands.

And from their tents the Tartar horsemen
filed

Into the open plain: so Haman bade, —
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled

The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse,

they streamed; 110

As when some gray November morn the
files,

In marching order spread, of long-necked
cranes

Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,

Or some frere Caspian reed-bed, southward
bound

For the warm Persian seaboard, — so they
streamed.

The Tartars of the Oxus, the king's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with
long spears;

Large men, large steeds, who from Bokhara
come

And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of
the south, 121

The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian
sands;

Light men and on light steeds, who only
drink

The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who
came

From far, and a more doubtful service
owned, —

The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards

And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder
hordes 130

Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern
waste,

Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes
who stray

Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pa-
mere, —

These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians formed, —

First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they
seemed,

The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnished
steel. ¹⁴⁰

But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the
front,

And with his staff kept back the foremost
ranks.

And when Ferood, who led the Persians,
saw

That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And checked his ranks, and fixed them
where they stood.

And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and
said, —

“Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars,
hear! ¹⁵⁰

Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian
lords

To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.”

As in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearly ears.
A shiver runs through the deep corn for
joy, —

So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons
ran

Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they
loved.

But as a troop of pedlars from Cabool ¹⁶⁰
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk
snow;

Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they
pass

Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the
snow,

Choked by the air, and scarce can they
themselves

Slake their parched throats with sugared
mulberries;

In single file they move, and stop their
breath,

For fear they should dislodge the o'erhang-
ing snows, —

So the pale Persians held their breath with
fear. ¹⁶⁵

And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zuarrab came,

And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the king;
These came and counselled, and then Gudurz
said, —

“Ferood, shame bids us take their chal-
lenge up,

Yet champion have we none to match this
youth.

He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he
sits

And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear ¹⁷⁰

The Tartar challenge, and this young man's
name;

Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their chal-
lenge up.”

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and
cried, —

“Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.”

He spake; and Peran-Wisa turned, and
strode

Back through the opening squadrons to his
tent.

But through the anxious Persians Gudurz
ran,

And crossed the camp which lay behind,
and reached, ¹⁸⁰

Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tent.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering
gay.

Just pitched; the high pavilion in the
midst

Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped
around.

And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and
found

Rustum; his morning meal was done, but
still

The table stood before him, charged with
food, —

A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark-green melons; and there Rustum
sat

Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist, ²⁰⁰
And played with it; but Gudurz came and
stood

Before him; and he looked, and saw him
stand,

And with a cry sprang up, and dropped
the bird,

And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and
said, —

"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."

But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said, —

"Not now. A time will come to eat and drink,

But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze; 210

For, from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name:

Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!

He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;

And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.

Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"

He spoke; but Rustum answered with a smile, — 220

"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older. If the young are weak, the king
Errs strangely; for the king, for Kai
Khosroo,

Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young:

The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts,
not I.

For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?

For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have! — 230

A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,

And he has none to guard his weak old age.

There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,

And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,

And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more." 240

He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply, —

"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,

When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks

Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,

Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say, —

*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."*

And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply, —

"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such word? 250

Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,

Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal? am not I myself?

But who for men of naught would do great deeds?

Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!

But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms:

Let not men say of Rustum, he was matched
In single fight with any mortal man."

He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz turned, and ran 260

Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy, —

Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.

But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and called

His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,

And clad himself in steel. The arms he chose

Were plain, and on his shield was no device;

Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine a-top, a plume

Of horse-hair waved, a scarlet horse-hair plume.

So armed, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse, 270

Followed him like a faithful hound at heel, —

Ruksh, whose renown was noised through
all the earth,

The horse whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find

A colt beneath its dam, and drove him
home,

And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty
crest,

Dight with a saddle-cloth of brodered
green

Crusted with gold, and on the ground were
worked

All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters
know.

So followed, Rustum left his tents, and
crossed ²⁸⁰

The camp, and to the Persian host ap-
peared.

And all the Persians knew him, and with
shouts

Hailed; but the Tartars knew not who he
was.

And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on
shore,

By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at
night,

Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands, —
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.

And Rustum to the Persian front ad-
vanced; ²⁹¹

And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and
came.

And as a-field the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's
corn,

And on each side are squares of standing
corn,

And in the midst a stubble short and
bare, —

So on each side were squares of men, with
spears

Bristling, and in the midst the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he
came. ³⁰¹

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor
drudge

Who with numb blackened fingers makes
her fire, —

At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,

When the frost flowers the whitened win-
dow-panes, —

And wonders how she lives, and what the
thoughts

Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum
eyed

The unknown adventurous youth, who from
afar ³²⁰

Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused

His spirited air, and wondered who he was
For very young he seemed, tenderly reared;

Like some young cypress, tall and dark and
straight,

Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,

By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's
sound, —

So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.
And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul

As he beheld him coming; and he stood, ³²⁰
And beckoned to him with his hand, and

said, —
“O thou young man, the air of heaven is
soft,

And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is
cold!

Heaven's air is better than the cold dead
grave.

Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a
field

Of blood, and I have fought with many a
foe:

Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on
death?

Be governed: quit the Tartar host, and
come ³³⁰

To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!

There are no youths in Iran brave as thou.”

So he spake, mildly. Sohrab heard his
voice,

The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,

Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years

Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streaked with its first gray hairs; hope

filled his soul, ³⁴⁰

And he ran forward, and embraced his
knees,

And clasped his hand within his own, and
said, —

"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?"

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turned away, and spake to his own soul,—

"Ah me! I muse what this young fox may mean!

False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say, *Rustum is here!* ³⁵⁰
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes;

But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,

A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry,—

'I challenged once, when the two armies camped

Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.' ³⁶¹

So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;

Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."

And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud,—

"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus

Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called

By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!

Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight? Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face, and flee!

For well I know, that did great Rustum stand ³⁷⁰

Before thy face this day, and were revealed,

There would be then no talk of fighting more.

But being what I am, I tell thee this,—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:

Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield,

Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds

Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,

Oxus in summer wash them all away."

He spoke; and Sohrab answered, on his feet,—

"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fight me so! ³⁸⁰

I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand

Here on this field, there were no fighting then;
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.

Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I;

And thou art proved, I know, and I am young.—

But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.

And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure

Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea, ³⁹⁰

Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall;

And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,—

Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,—

We know not, and no search will make us know:

Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke; and Rustum answered not, but hurled

His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came, ³⁹⁹

As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has towered in the airy clouds,

Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear

Hissed, and went quivering down into the sand,

Which it sent flying wide. Then Sohrab threw

In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,

The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.

And Rustum seized his club, which none but he

Could wield; an unlopped trunk it was, and huge,

Still rough, — like those which men in tree-
less plains 420
To build them boats fish from the flooded
rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-
time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the chaunels with torn boughs,
— so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and
struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club
came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rus-
tum's hand.
And Rustum followed his own blow, and
fell 430
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched
the sand.
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his
sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he
lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with
sand;
But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared his
sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and
said, —
“Thou strik'st too hard! that club of
thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my
soul. 430
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou, then, that canst so touch my
soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too, —
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touched be-
fore.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of
the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry
spears, 439
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like
friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's
deeda.

There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no
pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront
thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and
me!”
He ceased; but while he spake, Rustum
had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his
club 449
He left to lie, but had regained his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mailed right
hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-
star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soiled
His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering
arms.
His breast heaved, his lips foamed, and
twice his voice
Was choked with rage; at last these words
broke way: —
“Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with
thy hands!
Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet
words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no
more! 459
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont
to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and
wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone,
Because thou hast shamed me before both
the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks and thy girl's
wiles.”
He spoke: and Sohrab kindled at his
taunts, 470
And he too drew his sword; at once they
rushed
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the
clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their
shields
Dashed with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters

Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees,—such
blows

Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed.
And you would say that sun and stars took
part

In that unnatural conflict: for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and darked the
sun

Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the
plain,

And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapped, and
they alone;

For both the on-looking hosts on either
hand

Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was
pure,

And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with blood-
shot eyes

And laboring breath. First Rustum struck
the shield

Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-
spiked spear

Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach
the skin,

And Rustum plucked it back with angry
groan.

Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rus-
tum's helm,

Nor clove its steel quite through; but all
the crest

He shore away, and that proud horse-hair
plume,

Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bowed his head. But then the

gloom

Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh
the horse,

Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful cry:
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar

Of some pained desert-lion, who all day
Has trailed the hunter's javelin in his side,

And comes at night to die upon the sand;
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked

for fear,

And Oxus curdled as it crossed his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quailed not, but

rushed on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bowed

His head; but this time all the blade, like
glass,

480

490

499

511

Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remained alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful
eyes

Glared, and he shook on high his menacing
spear,

And shouted, *Rustum!* Sohrab heard that
shout,

And shrank amazed: back he recoiled one
step,

And scanned with blinking eyes the ad-
vancing form;

And then he stood bewildered, and he
dropped

His covering shield, and the spear pierced
his side.

He reeled, and staggering back sank to the
ground.

And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind
fell,

And the bright sun broke forth, and melted
all

The cloud; and the two armies saw the
pair,—

Saw Rustum standing safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab wounded on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum be-
gan,—

“Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,

And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent;
Or else that the great Rustum would come

down

Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would
move

His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would

praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy

fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.

Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown
man!

Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.”

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab re-
plied,—

“Unknown thou art, yet thy fierce vaunt is
vain.

Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful
man!

No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For, were I matched with ten such men as

thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,

520

531

540

They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerved my arm, —
That name, and something, I confess, in
thee,

Which troubles all my heart, and made my
shield

Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarmed
foe.

And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.⁵⁵⁰
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to
hear :

The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the
world,

He shall avenge my death, and punish
thee !”

As when some hunter in the spring hath
found

A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,⁵⁵⁸
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she fell
Far off ; anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off describes
His huddling young left sole ; at that, he
checks

His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest ; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers, — never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it ;⁵⁷⁰
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by, —
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his
loss,

So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

And with a cold, incredulous voice, he
said, —

“What prate is this of fathers and re-
venge ?

The mighty Rustum never had a son.”

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab re-
plied, —

“Ah, yes, he had ! and that lost son am I.⁵⁷⁹
Surely the news will one day reach his
ear, —

Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries
long,

Somewhere, I know not where, but far from
here ;

And pierce him like a stab, and make him
leap

To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that venge-
ance, be ?

Oh, could I live till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells⁵⁸⁰
With that old king, her father, who grows
gray

With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is
done.

But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;
But that in battle with a nameless foe,⁶⁰⁰
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain.”

He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept
aloud,

Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged
in thought.

Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he called back names
he knew;

For he had had sure tidings that the babe
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in
arms.⁶¹¹

And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deemed he: yet he listened, plunged in
thought;

And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gathered in his eyes;
For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-ledge
descries⁶²¹

A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds, — so Rustum
saw

His youth; saw Sohrab's mother in her
bloom;

And that old king, her father, who loved
well

His wandering guest, and gave him his fair
child

With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-
time, —

The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful
hills 630

In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand;
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass, — so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and
said, — 640

“O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well
have loved!

Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false: thou art not Rustum’s
son.

For Rustum had no son: one child he had, —
But one, — a girl; who with her mother
now

Plies some light female task, nor dreams of
us, —

Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor
war.”

But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for
now

The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew
fierce, 650

And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die.
But first he would convince his stubborn
foe;

And, rising sternly on one arm, he said, —
“Man, who art thou who dost deny my
words?

Truth sits upon the lips of dying men;
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from
mine.

I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother
gave,

That she might prick it on the babe she
bore.” 660

He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum’s
cheeks,

And his knees tottered, and he smote his
hand

Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corselet clanked aloud;

And to his heart he pressed the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said, —

“Sohrab, that were a proof which could
not lie!

If thou show this, then art thou Rustum’s
son.”

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab
loosed

His belt, and near the shoulder bared his
arm, 670

And showed a sign in faint vermilion points
Pricked; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain
vase,

An emperor’s gift, — at early morn he
paints,

And all day long, and, when night comes,
the lamp

Lights up his studious forehead and thin
hands, —

So delicately pricked the sign appeared
On Sohrab’s arm, the sign of Rustum’s seal.
It was that griffin which of old reared Zal,
Rustum’s great father, whom they left to
die, 680

A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and reared,
and loved;

Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scanned it long with mournful
eyes,

And then he touched it with his hand, and
said, —

“How say’st thou? Is that sign the
proper sign

Of Rustum’s son, or of some other man’s?”
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed,
and stood

Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp
cry, — 690

O boy — thy father! and his voice choked
there.

And then a dark cloud passed before his
eyes,

And his head swam, and he sank down to
earth.

But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and
cast

His arms about his neck, and kissed his
lips,

And with fond faltering fingers stroked his
cheeks,

Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,

And they stood wide with horror; and he
 seized 699
 In both his hands the dust which lay around,
 And threw it on his head, and smirched his
 hair, —
 His hair, and face, and beard, and glitter-
 ing arms;
 And strong convulsive groanings shook his
 breast,
 And his sobs choked him; and he clutched
 his sword,
 To draw it, and forever let life out:
 But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his
 hands,
 And with a soothing voice he spake, and
 said, —
 "Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
 The doom which at my birth was written
 down
 In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's uncon-
 scious hand. 710
 Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
 When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke
 too,
 I know it! But fate trod those promptings
 down
 Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
 The strife, and hurled me on my father's
 spear.
 But let us speak no more of this. I find
 My father, let me feel that I have found!
 Come, sit beside me on this sand, and
 take
 My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my
 cheeks,
 And wash them with thy tears, and say,
My son! 720
 Quick, quick! for numbered are my sands
 of life,
 And swift; for like the lightning to this
 field
 I came, and like the wind I go away, —
 Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind;
 But it was writ in Heaven that this should
 be."
 So said he; and his voice released the
 heart
 Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he
 cast
 His arms round his son's neck, and wept
 aloud,
 And kissed him. And awe fell on both the
 hosts,
 When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh,
 the horse, 730

With his head bowing to the ground, and
 mane
 Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute
 woe
 First to the one, then to the other, moved
 His head, as if inquiring what their grief
 Might mean; and from his dark, compas-
 sionate eyes,
 The big warm tears rolled down, and caked
 the sand.
 But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and
 said, —
 "Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O
 Ruksh, thy feet
 Should not have rotted on their nimble
 joints,
 When first they bore thy master to this
 field!" 740
 But Sohrab looked upon the horse, and
 said, —
 "Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past
 days,
 My mother told me of thee, thou brave
 steed,
 My terrible father's terrible horse! and
 said,
 That I should one day find thy lord and
 thee.
 Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
 O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I!
 For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
 And snuffed the breezes of my father's
 home.
 And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
 And seen the River of Helmund, and the
 Lake 750
 Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
 Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee
 food,
 Corn in a golden platter, soaked with
 wine,
 And said, *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!*
 But I
 Have never known my grandsire's furrowed
 face,
 Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
 Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund
 stream;
 But lodged among my father's foes, and
 seen
 Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand, 760
 Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
 And the black Toorkman tents; and only
 drunk
 The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,

Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their
sheep,

The northern Sir; and this great Oxus
stream,

The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum be-
wailed, —

"Oh that its waves were flowing over
me!

Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my
head!" 770

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab re-
plied, —

"Desire not that, my father! thou must
live.

For some are born to do great deeds, and
live

As some are born to be obscure, and die.

Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,

And reap a second glory in thine age;

Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.

But come! thou seest this great host of
men

Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not
these!

Let me entreat for them: what have they
done? 780

They followed me, my hope, my fame, my
star.

Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.

But me thou must bear hence, not send
with them,

But carry me with thee to Seistan,

And place me on a bed, and mourn for
me, —

Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy
friends.

And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,

And heap a stately mound above my bones,

And plant a far-seen pillar over all;

That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and
cry, — 791

*Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!*

And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum re-
plied, —

"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab my
son,

So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence
with me,

And carry thee away to Seistan,

And place thee on a bed, and mourn for
thee, 800

With the snow-headed Zal, and all my
friends.

And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy
bones,

And plant a far-seen pillar over all,

And men shall not forget thee in thy
grave.

And I will spare thy host; yea, let them
go!

Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!

What should I do with slaying any more?

For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive, — my bitterest
foes, 810

And they who were called champions in
their time,

And through whose death I won that fame
I have, —

And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,

So thou mightest live too, my son, my
son!

Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,

Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of
thine,

Not thou of mine! and I might die, not
thou;

And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan; 820

And Zal might weep above my grave, not
thine;

And say, *O son, I weep thee not too sore,
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!*

But now in blood and battles was my
youth,

And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab re-
plied, —

"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful
man!

But thou shalt yet have peace; only not
now,

Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that
day, 830

When thou shalt sail in a high-masted
ship,

Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,

From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and
said, —

"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea !

Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him,
and took

The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased

His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood ⁸⁴⁰

Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flowed with the stream; all down his cold
white side

The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soiled,

Like the soiled tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gathered, on their native
bank,

By children whom their nurses call with
haste

In-doors from the sun's eye; his head
drooped low,

His limbs grew slack; motionless, white,
he lay,—

White, with eyes closed; only when heavy
gasps,

Deep heavy gasps quivering through all
his frame, ⁸⁵⁰

Convulsed him back to life, he opened
them,

And fixed them feebly on his father's
face;

Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from
his limbs

Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it
left,

And youth, and bloom, and this delightful
world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horse-
man's cloak

Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead
son.

As those black granite pillars, once high-
reared ⁸⁶⁰

By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of
steps

Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain
side,—

So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn
waste,

And the two gazing hosts, and that sole
pair,

And darkened all; and a cold fog, with
night,

Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires

Began to twinkle through the fog; for
now ⁸⁷⁰

Both armies moved to camp, and took their
meal;

The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river-marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian
waste,

Under the solitary moon; he flowed
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè, so
Brimming, and bright, and large; then
sands begin

To hem his watery march, and dam his
streams,

And split his currents; that for many a
league

The shorn and parcelled Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rusy
isles,—

Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,

A foiled circuitous wanderer,—till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and
wide

His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-
bathed stars ⁸⁹¹

Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

[Publ. 1849.]

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go,—
Call once yet !

In a voice that she will know, —
 "Margaret! Margaret!"
 Children's voices should be dear
 (Call once more) to a mother's ear;
 Children's voices, wild with pain, —
 Surely she will come again!
 Call her once, and come away;
 This way, this way!
 "Mother dear, we cannot stay!"
 The wild white horses foam and fret."
 Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down:
 Call no more!
 One last look at the white-walled town,
 And the little gray church on the windy
 shore:
 Then come down!
 She will not come, though you call all day;
 Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday³⁰
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay, —
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far-off sound of a silver bell?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
 Where the winds are all asleep;
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,⁴¹
 Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye?
 When did music come this way?
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away?
 Once she sate with you and me,⁵⁰
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the
 sea,

And the youngest sate on her knee.
 She combed its bright hair, and she tended
 it well,
 When down swung the sound of a far-off
 bell.
 She sighed, she looked up through the clear
 green sea;
 She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
 In the little gray church on the shore to-
 day.

"T will be Easter-time in the world — ah
 me!
 And I lose my poor soul, merman! here
 with thee."
 I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the
 waves;
 Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind
 sea-caves!"
 She smiled, she went up through the surf
 in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?
 Children dear, were we long alone?
 "The sea grows stormy, the little ones
 moan;
 Long prayers," I said, "in the world they
 say;
 Come!" I said; and we rose through the
 surf in the bay.
 We went up the beach, by the sandy down
 Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-
 walled town;
 Through the narrow paved streets, where
 all was still,⁷⁰
 To the little gray church on the windy hill.
 From the church came a murmur of folk
 at their prayers,
 But we stood without in the cold blowing
 airs.
 We climbed on the graves, on the stones
 worn with rains,
 And we gazed up the aisle through the
 small leaded panes.
 She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
 "Margaret, hie! come quick, we are here!
 Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
 The sea grows stormy, the little ones
 moan."
 But, ah! she gave me never a look,⁸⁰
 For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
 Loud prays the priest; shut stands the
 door.
 Come away, children, call no more!
 Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
 Down to the depths of the sea!
 She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
 Singing most joyfully.
 Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
 For the humming street, and the child with
 its toy!⁹⁰
 For the priest, and the bell, and the holy
 well;
 For the wheel where I spun,

And the blessed light of the sun ! ”
 And so she sings her fill,
 Singing most joyfully,
 Till the spindle drops from her hand,
 And the whizzing wheel stands still.
 She steals to the window, and looks at the
 sand,

And over the sand at the sea;
 And her eyes are set in a stare; 100
 And anon there breaks a sigh,
 And anon there drops a tear,
 From a sorrow-clouded eye,
 And a heart sorrow-laden,
 A long, long sigh,
 For the cold strange eyes of a little mer-
 maiden,
 And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
 Come, children, come down!
 The hoarse wind blows colder; 120
 Lights shine in the town.
 She will start from her slumber
 When gusts shake the door:
 She will hear the winds howling,
 Will hear the waves roar.
 We shall see, while above us
 The waves roar and whirl,
 A ceiling of amber,
 A pavement of pearl.
 Singing, “ Here came a mortal,
 But faithless was she !
 And alone dwell forever
 The kings of the sea.”

But, children, at midnight,
 When soft the winds blow,
 When clear falls the moonlight,
 When spring-tides are low;
 When sweet airs come seaward
 From heaths starred with broom,
 And high rocks throw mildly 130
 On the blanched sands a gloom;
 Up the still, glistening beaches,
 Up the creeks we will hie,
 Over banks of bright seaweed
 The ebb-tide leaves dry.
 We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
 At the white sleeping town;
 At the church on the hill-side,
 And then come back down,
 Singing, “ There dwells a loved one,
 But cruel is she !
 She left lonely forever
 The kings of the sea.” 140

PHILOMELA

[Publ. 1853]

HARK ! ah, the nightingale—
 The tawny-throated !
 Hark ! from that moonlit cedar what a
 burst !
 What triumph ! hark ! what pain !

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
 Still, after many years, in distant lands,
 Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
 That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-
 world pain.

Say, will it never heal ?
 And can this fragrant lawn 10
 With its cool trees, and night,
 And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
 And moonshine, and the dew,
 To thy racked heart and brain
 Afford no balm ?

Dost thou to-night behold,
 Here, through the moonlight on this Eng-
 lish grass.
 The unfriendly palace in the Thracian
 wild ?

Dost thou again peruse
 With hot cheeks and seared eyes 20
 The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's
 shame ?

Dost thou once more assay
 Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
 Poor fugitive, the feathery change
 Once more, and once more seem to make
 resound

With love and hate, triumph and agony,
 Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale ?
 Listen, Eugenia,—
 How thick the bursts come crowding
 through the leaves !
 Again — thou hearest ?
 Eternal passion ! 30
 Eternal pain !

DOVER BEACH

[Publ. 1853]

THE sea is calm to-night.
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 Upon the straits; on the French coast, the
 light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England
stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil
bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-
air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd
sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back,
and fling, 10
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery: we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea. 20

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's
shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melaancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges
drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams, 31
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor
light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for
pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle
and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

THE LAST WORD

CREEP into thy narrow bed, —
Creep, and let no more be said.
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired: best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee; 10
Fired their ringing shot, and passed,
Hotly charged — and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

MORALITY

WE cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 't were done. 20
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask how she viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling, tasked morality, —
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek, 30
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
"Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?"

"There is no effort on my brow;
I do not strive, I do not weep:
I rush with the swift spheres, and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once — but where?" 30

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;

I felt it in some other clime,
 I saw it in some other place.
 'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
 And lay upon the breast of God."

A SUMMER NIGHT

[Publ. 1852]

In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,
 How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
 Those windows which I gaze at, frown,
 Silent and white, unopening down,
 Repellent as the world; but see,
 A break between the housetops shows
 The moon! and lost behind her, fading dim
 Into the dewy dark obscurity
 Down at the far horizon's rim,
 Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose! 20

And to my mind the thought
 Is on a sudden brought
 Of a past night, and a far different scene.
 Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
 As clearly as at noon;
 The spring-tide's brimming flow
 Heaved dazzlingly between;
 Houses, with long white sweep,
 Girdled the glistening bay;
 Behind, through the soft air, 20
 The blue haze-cradled mountains spread
 away.

That night was far more fair —
 But the same restless paces to and fro,
 And the same vainly throbbing heart was
 there,
 And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say, —
*Hast thou, then, still the old unquiet breast,
 Which neither deadens into rest,
 Nor ever feels the fiery glow
 That whirls the spirit from itself away, 30
 But fluctuates to and fro,
 Never by passion quite possessed,
 And never quite benumbed by the world's sway?*
 And I, I know not if to pray
 Still to be what I am, or yield, and be
 Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
 Where, in the sun's hot eye,
 With heads bent o'er their toil, they lan-
 guidly

Their lives to some unmeaning task-work
 give,
 Dreaming of naught beyond their prison-
 wall.

And as, year after year,
 Fresh products of their barren labor fall
 From their tired hands, and rest
 Never yet comes more near,
 Gloom settles slowly down over their
 breast.

And while they try to stem
 The waves of mournful thought by which
 they are prest,
 Death in their prison reaches them,
 Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest

And the rest, a few, 5
 Escape their prison, and depart
 On the wide ocean of life anew.
 There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
 Listeth, will sail;
 Nor doth he know how there prevail,
 Despotic on that sea,
 Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
 Awhile he holds some false way, unbarred
 By thwarting signs, and braves 10
 The freshening wind and blackening waves.
 And then the tempest strikes him; and be-
 tween

The lightning-bursts is seen
 Only a driving wreck,
 And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
 With anguished face and flying hair,
 Grasping the rudder hard,
 Still bent to make some port, he knows not
 where,
 Still standing for some false, impossible
 shore.

And sterner comes the roar 15
 Of sea and wind; and through the deepening
 gloom
 Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman
 loom,
 And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
 Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of
 stain!

Clearness divine!
 Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have
 no sign
 Of languor, though so calm, and though so
 great

Are yet untroubled and unpassionate; 20
Who, though so noble, share in the world's
toil,
And, though so tasked, keep free from dust
and soil!

I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have longed deeply once, and longed
in vain;

But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to live there, and breathe
free; 30

How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

THE BURIED LIFE

[Publ. 1853]

LIGHT flows our war of mocking words; and
yet,

Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile!
But there's a something in this breast,
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne;
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine, 10
And let me read there, love! thy inmost
soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel?
I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame re-
proved;

I knew they lived and moved 20
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves — and yet
The same heart beats in every human
breast!

But we, my love! doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices? must we too be
dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
For that which seals them hath been deep-
ordained!

Fate, which foresaw 30
How frivolous a baby man would be, —
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own identity, —
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our
breast

The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way; 40
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded
streets,

But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course; 50
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us, — to know
Whence our lives come, and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then
delves,

But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and
power;

But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been our-
selves, — 60

Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through
our breast,

But they course on forever unexpressed.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well — but 't is not true!
And then we will no more be racked
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power; 70
Ah, yes, and they benumb us at our call!

Where the snowy mountainous pass,
 Echoing the screams of the eagles, 10
 Hems in its gorges the bed
 Of the new-born, clear-flowing stream;
 Whether he first sees light
 Where the river in gleaming rings
 Sluggishly winds through the plain;
 Whether in sound of the swallowing sea, —
 As is the world on the banks,
 So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,
 Fable and dream 20
 Of the lands which the river of Time
 Had left ere he woke on its breast,
 Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.
 Only the tract where he sails
 He wots of; only the thoughts,
 Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
 As she was by the sources of Time?
 Who imagines her fields as they lay
 In the sunshine, unworn by the plough? 30
 Who thinks as they thought,
 The tribes who then roamed on her breast,
 Her vigorous, primitive sons?

What girl
 Now reads in her bosom as clear
 As Rebekah read, when she sate
 At eve by the palm-shaded well?
 Who guards in her breast
 As deep, as pellucid a spring
 Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure? 40

What bard,
 At the height of his vision, can deem
 Of God, of the world, of the soul,
 With a plainness as near,
 As flashing, as Moses felt,
 When he lay in the night by his flock
 On the starlit Arabian waste?
 Can rise and obey
 The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time 50
 Now flows through with us, is the plain.
 Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
 Bordered by cities, and hoarse
 With a thousand cries is its stream.
 And we on its breast, our muds
 Are confused as the cries which we hear,
 Changing and short as the sights which we
 see.

And we say that repose has fled
 Forever the course of the river of Time.
 That cities will crowd to its edge 60
 In a blacker, incessanter line;
 That the din will be more on its banks,
 Denser the trade on its stream,
 Flatter the plain where it flows,
 Fiercer the sun overhead;
 That never will those on its breast
 See an ennobling sight,
 Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
 And we know not what shall succeed. 70

Haply, the river of Time —
 As it grows, as the towns on its marge
 Fling their wavering lights
 On a wider, statelier stream —
 May acquire, if not the calm
 Of its early mountainous shore,
 Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
 Of the gray expanse where he floats,
 Freshening its current, and spotted with
 foam 80

As it draws to the ocean, may strike
 Peace to the soul of the man on its breast, —
 As the pale waste widens around him,
 As the banks fade dimmer away,
 As the stars come out, and the night-wind
 Brings up the stream
 Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY

[Publ. 1853]

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the
 hill;

Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled
 cotes!

No longer leave thy wistful flock un-
 fed,

Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their
 throats,

Nor the cropped grasses shoot another
 head;

But when the fields are still,
 And the tired men and dogs all gone to
 rest,

And only the white sheep are sometimes
 seen

Cross and recross the strips of moon-
 blanched green,
 Come, shepherd, and again renew the
 quest! 10

Here, where the reaper was at work of
 late, —

In this high field's dark corner, where he
 leaves

His coat, his basket, and his earthen
 cruse,

And in the sun all morning binds the
 sheaves,

Then here at noon comes back his stores
 to use, —

Here will I sit and wait,
 While to my ear from uplands far away
 The bleating of the folded flocks is
 borne,

With distant cries of reapers in the
 corn, — 19

All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-
 reaped field,

And here till sundown, shepherd! will I
 be.

Through the thick corn the scarlet pop-
 pies peep,

And round green roots and yellowing
 stalks I see

Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep;
 And air-swept ludens yield

Their scent, and rustle down their per-
 fumed showers

Of bloom on the bent grass where I am
 laid,

And bower me from the August-sun
 with shade;

And the eye travels down to Oxford's
 towers. 30

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's
 book.

Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
 The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
 Of shining parts and quick inventive
 brain,

Who, tired of knocking at preferment's
 door,

One summer-morn forsook

His friends, and went to learn the gypsy-
 lore,

And roamed the world with that wild
 brotherhood,

And came, as most men deemed, to
 little good,
 But came to Oxford and his friends no
 more. c

But once, years after, in the country-lane
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he
 knew,

Met him, and of his way of life in-
 quired;

Whereat he answered, that the gypsy-
 crew,

His mates, had arts to rule as they
 desired

The workings of men's brains,
 And they can bind them to what thoughts
 they will.

"And I," he said, "the secret of their
 art,

When fully learned, will to the world
 impart;

But it needs Heaven-sent moments for
 this skill." f

This said, he left them, and returned no
 more.

But rumors hung about the country-side,
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to
 stray,

Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-
 tied,

In hat of antique shape, and cloak of
 gray,

The same the gypsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in
 spring;

At some lone alehouse in the Berk-
 shire moors,

On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-
 frocked boors 50

Had found him seated at their entering;

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would
 fly.

And I myself seem half to know thy
 looks,

And put the shepherds, wanderer! on
 thy trace;

And boys who in lone wheat-fields scare
 the rooks

I ask if thou hast passed their quiet
 place;

Or in my boat I lie

Moored to the cool bank in the summer
 heats,

'Mid wide grass meadows which the
sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled
Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy
retreats. 70

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights,
have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-
lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers
wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of
flowers
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wych-
wood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit
stream. 80
And then they land, and thou art seen no
more!

Maidens, who from the distant hamlets
come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in
May,
Oft through the darkening fields have
seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way;
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers,—the frail-leaved, white
anemone,
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of
summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted
leaves. —
But none hath words she can report of
thee! 90

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-
time 's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine
flames,
Men who through those wide fields of
breezy grass,
Where black-winged swallows haunt the
glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river-bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy fig-
ure spare,

Thy dark vague eyes, and soft ab-
stracted air:
But, when they came from bathing, thou
wast gone! 100

At some lone homestead in the Cumner
hills,
Where at her open door the housewife
darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a
gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy
barns.
Children, who early range these slopes
and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April
day,
The springing pastures and the feed-
ing kine;
And marked thee, when the stars
come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move
slow away. 110

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood, —
Where most the gypsies by the turf-
edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every
bush you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds
of gray,
Above the forest ground called Thes-
saly, —
The blackbird picking food
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears
at all;
So often has he known thee past him
stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered
spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven
to fall. 120

And once, in winter, on the causeway
chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-
travellers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden
bridge
Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with
the snow,
Thy face toward Hinksey and its win-
try ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill,

And gained the white brow of the Cum-
ner range;
Turned once to watch, while thick the
snow-flakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-church
hall:
Then sought thy straw in some seques-
tered grange. 130

But what—I dream! Two hundred years
are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford
halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale in-
scribe
That thou wert wandered from the stu-
dious walls
To learn strange arts, and join the
gypsy-tribe.
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard
laid,—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy un-
known grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles
wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's
shade. 140

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of
hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal
men?
'T is that from change to change their
being rolls;
'T is that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,
And numb the elastic powers,
Till having used our nerves with bliss
and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes
our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we re-
mit
Our well-worn life, and are — what we
have been. 150

Thou hast not lived, why shouldst thou
perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* de-
sire;
Else wert thou long since numbered
with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy
fire!

The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from
age,
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's
page,
Because thou hadst — what we, alas! have
not. 160

For early didst thou leave the world, with
powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other
things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid
doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much
been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for
what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different
lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in
hope. 170

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven!
and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly
willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in
deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been
fulfilled;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments
new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won
to-day —
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it! but it still delays, 180
And then we suffer! and amongst us
one,
Who most has suffered, takes deject-
edly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth
and signs,

And how the dying spark of hope was
fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and
how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes. 190

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would
end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try
to bear;
With close-lipped patience for our only
friend,—
Sad patience, too near neighbor to de-
spair,—
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the
woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time
away. 200

Oh, born in days when wits were fresh and
clear,
And life ran gayly as the sparkling
Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern
life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts,
was rife,—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering
wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in
Hades turn, 209
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing
through,
By night, the silvered branches of the
glade,—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none
pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted
ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightin-
gales! 220

But fly our paths, our feverish contact
fly!
For strong the infection of our mental
strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet
spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own
fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed
thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shift-
ing made:
And then thy glad perennial youth
would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like
ours. 230

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and
smiles!
— As some grave Tyrian trader, from
the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealth-
ily,
The fringes of a southward-facing
brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster
come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and
Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies
steeped in brine,
And knew the intruders on his ancient
home, — 240

The young light-hearted masters of the
waves, —
And snatched his rudder, and shook out
more sail,
And day and night held on indig-
nantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the
gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits, and unbent
sails
There where down cloudy cliffs,
through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians
come; 249
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

THYRSIS

A MONODY, to commemorate the author's friend
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH,
who died at Florence, 1861

[Publ. 1867]

How changed is here each spot man makes
or fills!

In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the
same;

The village street its haunted mansion
lacks,

And from the sign is gone Sibylla's
name,

And from the roofs the twisted chim-
ney-stacks. —

Are ye too changed, ye hills?

See, 't is no foot of unfamiliar men

To-night from Oxford up your path-
way strays!

Here came I often, often, in old
days, —

Thyrsis and I: we still had Thyrsis
then. 10

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth
Farm,

Past the high wood, to where the elm-
tree crowns

The hill behind whose ridge the sun-
set flames?

The single-elm, that looks on Ilsey
Downs,

The Vale, the three lone wears, the
youthful Thames?

This winter-eve is warm;

Humid the air; leafless, yet soft as spring.

The tender purple spray on copse and
briers;

And that sweet city with her dream-
ing spires,

She needs not June for beauty's height-
ening. 20

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night! —

Only, methinks, some loss of habit's
power

Befalls me wandering through this
upland dim.

Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;

Now seldom come I, since I came
with him.

That single elm-tree bright

Against the west — I miss it! is it gone?

We prized it dearly; while it stood,
we said,

Our friend the Gypsy-Scholar was not
dead;

While the tree lived, he in these fields
lived on. 30

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower,
each stick;

And with the country-folk acquaint-
ance made

By barn in threshing-time, by new-built
rick.

Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first
assayed.

Ah me! this many a year

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday!

Needs must I lose them, needs with
heavy heart

Into the world and wave of men depart,
But Thyrsis of his own will went away. 40

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.

He loved each simple joy the country
yields,

He loved his mates; but yet he could
not keep,

For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly

sheep.

Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and
filled his head.

He went; his piping took a troubled
sound

Of storms that rage outside our happy
ground;

He could not wait their passing; he is
dead. 50

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,

When the year's primal burst of bloom
is o'er,

Before the roses and the longest day, —
When garden-walks, and all the grassy

floor,

With blossoms red and white of fallen
May,

And chestnut-flowers, are strewn, —

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting
cry,

From the wet field, through the vexed
garden-trees,

Come with the volleying rain and toss-
ing breeze:

*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom
go I!* 60

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?

Soon will the high midsummer poms
come on,

Soon will the musk carnations break
and swell,

Soon shall we have gold-dusted snap-
dragon,

Sweet-william with his homely cottage-
smell,

And stocks in fragrant blow;

Roses that down the alleys shine afar,

And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,

And groups under the dreaming gar-
den-trees,

And the full moon, and the white even-
ing-star. 70

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!

What matters it? next year he will re-
turn,

And we shall have him in the sweet
spring-days,

With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling
fern,

And bluebells trembling by the forest-
ways,

And scent of hay new-mown.

But Thyrsis never more we swains shall
see, —

See him come back, and cut a smoother
reed,

And blow a strain the world at last
shall heed;

For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered
thee! 80

Alack, for Corydon no rival now! —

But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute

would go,

Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;

And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,

And relax Pluto's brow,

And make leap up with joy the beauteous
head

Of Proserpine, among whose crown'd
hair

Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,

And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from
the dead. 90

Oh, easy access to the hearer's grace

When Dorian shepherds sang to Proser-
pine!

For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,

She knew each lily white which Enna
yields,

Each rose with blushing face;

She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian
strain.

But ah! of our poor Thames she never
heard;

Her foot the Cumner cowslips never
stirred;

And we should tease her with our plaint
in vain. 100

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words
will be;

Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-
topped hill!

Who, if not I, for questing here hath
power?

I know the wood which hides the daf-
fodil;

I know the Fyfield tree;

I know what white, what purple fritil-
laries

The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford,

yields;

And what sedged brooks are Thames's
tributaries; 110

I know these slopes: who knows them if
not I?

But many a dingle on the loved hillside,
With thorns once studied, old white-
blossomed trees,

Where thick the cowslips grew, and far
descried

High towered the spikes of purple
orchises,

Hath since our day put by

The coronals of that forgotten time;

Down each green bank hath gone the
ploughboy's team,

And only in the hidden brookside
gleam 119

Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl who by the boatman's door,

Above the locks, above the boating
throng,

Unmoored our skiff when through the
Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet
among,
And darting swallows and light water-
gnats,
We tracked the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny
swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-
grass,
Stood with suspended scythes to see us
pass? —
They all are gone, and thou art gone as
well! 130

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the
night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the
day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair
sprent with gray;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong
train, —
The foot less prompt to meet the
morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crushed, less quick to
spring again. 140

And long the way appears, which seemed
so short
To the less-practised eye of sanguine
youth;
And high the mountain tops, in cloudy
air, —
The mountain tops where is the throne
of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright
and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly tur-
moil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy
repose,
And glad as welcome as a friend would
fall. 150

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet! Look, adown the dusk hill-
side,

A troop of Oxford hunters going home.
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride
From hunting with the Berkshire
hounds they come.

Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field! 'T is done; and
see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth
glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-
sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the
Tree! 160

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil.
The white fog creeps from bush to bush
about,
The west unflashes, the high stars
grow bright,
And in the scattered farms the lights
come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-
vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eye-
lids keep
The morningless and unawakening
sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale); 170

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there! —
Ah, vain! These English fields, this up-
land dim,
These brambles pale with mist engar-
landed,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for
him:
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train
divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than
thee,
I trow the mighty Mother doth not
see)
Within a folding of the Apennine, — 180

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!
Putting his sickle to the perilous gain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian
king
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice
doth sing:
Sings his Sicilian fold,

His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded
eyes;
And how a call celestial round him
rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-
brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies. 190

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest
here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not de-
spair.

Despair I will not, while I yet desery
'Neath the soft canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western
sky.

Still, still these slopes, 't is clear,
Our Gypsy-Scholar haunts, outliving
thee!

Fields where soft sheep from cages
pull the hay,

Woods with anemones in flower till
May,

Know him a wanderer still; then why
not me? 200

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.

This does not come with houses or with
gold,

With place, with honor, and a flattering
crew;

'T is not in the world's market bought
and sold:

But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still un-
tired;

Out of the heed of mortals he is
gone,

He wends unfollowed, he must house
alone;

Yet on he fares, by his own heart in-
spired. 210

Thou too, O Thyriss, on like quest wast
bound!

Thou wanderedst with me for a little
hour.

Men gave thee nothing; but this happy
quest,

If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee
power,

If men procured thee trouble, gave
thee rest.

And this rude Cumner ground,

Its fir-topped Hurst, its fawns, its quiet
fields,

Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youth-
ful time,

Here was thine height of strength, thy
golden prime!

And still the haunt beloved a virtue
yields. 220

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy
note

Of men contention-tost, of men who
groan,

Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and
tired thy throat—

It failed, and thou wast mute!

Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst
not stay,

And soon thy foot resumed its wan-
dering way, 229

Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyriss! in reach of sheep-bells is my
home.

— Then through the great town's harsh,
heart-wearying roar,

Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:

*Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shin-
ing still.*

*Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet
crowns the hill,*

Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside. 240

MEMORIAL VERSES

APRIL, 1830

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps; and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remained to come:
The last poetic voice is dumb,—
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bowed our head, and held our breath.
He taught us little, but our soul
Had felt him like the thunder's roll.

With shivering heart the strife we saw 10
 Of passion with eternal law;
 And yet with reverential awe
 We watched the fount of fiery life
 Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said, —
 Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
 Physician of the iron age,
 Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
 He took the suffering human race, 19
 He read each wound, each weakness clear;
 And struck his finger on the place,
 And said, *Thou ailest here, and here!*
 He looked on Europe's dying hour
 Of fitful dream and feverish power;
 His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
 The turmoil of expiring life:
 He said, *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
 And he was happy, if to know
 Causes of things, and far below 30
 His feet to see the lurid flow
 Of terror, and insane distress,
 And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
 For never has such soothing voice
 Been to your shadowy world conveyed,
 Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
 Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
 Through Hades and the mournful gloom.
 Wordsworth has gone from us; and ye, 40
 Ah, may ye feel his voice as wel
 He too upon a wintry clime
 Had fallen, — on this iron time
 Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
 He found us when the age had bound
 Our souls in its benumbing round;
 He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
 He laid us as we lay at birth
 On the cool flowery lap of earth:
 Smiles broke from us, and we had ease; 50
 The hills were round us, and the breeze
 Went o'er the sunlit fields again;
 Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
 Our youth returned; for there was shed
 On spirits that had long been dead,
 Spirits dried up and closely furled,
 The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
 Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
 Time may restore us in his course 60
 Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;

But where will Europe's latter hour
 Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
 Others will teach us how to dare,
 And against fear our breast to steel:
 Others will strengthen us to bear —
 But who, ah! who will make us feel?
 The cloud of mortal destiny,
 Others will front it fearlessly;
 But who, like him, will put it by? 70
 Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
 O Rotha, with thy living wave!
 Sing him thy best! for few or none
 Hear thy voice right, now he is gone.

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

COLDLY, sadly descends
 The autumn evening. The field
 Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
 Of withered leaves, and the elms,
 Fade into dimness apace,
 Silent; hardly a shout
 From a few boys late at their play!
 The lights come out in the street,
 In the schoolroom windows; but cold,
 Solemn, unlighted, austere, 80
 Through the gathering darkness, arise
 The chapel-walls, in whose bound
 Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
 Of the autumn evening. But ah!
 That word *gloom* to my mind
 Brings thee back in the light
 Of thy radiant vigor again.
 In the gloom of November we passed
 Days not dark at thy side; 90
 Seasons impaired not the ray
 Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
 Such thou wast! and I stand
 In the autumn evening, and think
 Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
 Since thou aroseth to tread,
 In the summer-morning, the road
 Of death, at a call unforeseen,
 Sudden. For fifteen years, 95
 We who till then in thy shade
 Rested as under the boughs
 Of a mighty oak, have endured
 Sunshine and rain as we might,

Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,
Prompt, unwearied, as here.
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground, 50
Sternly represses the bad;
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest. This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about 60
Here and there, eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die, —
Perish; and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild 70
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die 80
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave.
We, we have chosen our path, —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,

Path of advance; but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth:
Then, on the height, comes the storm. 90
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock; the cataracts reply;
Lightnings dazzle our eyes;
Roaring torrents have breached
The track; the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep; the spray
Boils o'er its borders; aloft,
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin. Alas! 100
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends who set forth at our side
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On; and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host 110
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs,
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks, —
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer, We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm. 119
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die. 130
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing: to us thou wast still

Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

140

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous and arid and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

150

160

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost, —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted and fallen and died.

170

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!

Years they have been in the wild:
Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
Rising all around, overawe;
Factions divide them; their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
Ah! keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; on the rocks
Batter forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

180

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,

Ye like angels appear,
Radiant with ardor divine.
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave.
Order, courage, return;
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

19

200

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

[Publ. 1867]

THROUGH Alpine meadows soft-suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
Past the dark forges long disused,
The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes.
The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride,
Through forest, up the mountain side.

The autumnal evening darkens round,
The wind is up, and drives the rain;
While, hark! far down, with strangled
sound
Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain,
Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
Over his boiling caldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white
Past limestone scars with ragged pines,
Showing — then blotting from our sight! —
Halt — through the cloud-drift something
shines!
High in the valley, wet and drear,
The huts of Courrerie appear.

Strike leftward! cries our guide; and higher
Mounts up the stony forest-way.
At last the encircling trees retire;
Look! through the showery twilight gray.
What pointed roofs are these advance?
A palace of the kings of France?

21

Approach, for what we seek is here!
 Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
 For rest in this outbuilding near;
 Then cross the sward, and reach that gate;
 Knock; pass the wicket. Thou art come
 To the Carthusians' world-famed home. 30

The silent courts, where night and day
 Into their stone-carved basins cold
 The splashing icy fountains play,
 The humid corridors behold,
 Where, ghost-like in the deepening night,
 Cowled forms brush by in gleaming white!

The chapel, where no organ's peal
 Invests the stern and naked prayer!
 With penitential cries they kneel
 And wrestle; rising then, with bare 40
 And white uplifted faces stand,
 Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan
 Is buried in his cowl once more.
 The cells! — the suffering Son of man
 Upon the wall; the knee-worn floor;
 And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
 Which shall their coffin be when dead!

The library, where tract and tome 50
 Not to feed priestly pride are there,
 To him the conquering march of Rome,
 Nor yet to amuse, as ours are:
 They paint of souls the inner strife,
 Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown — yet mild,
 See, fragrant herbs are flowering there:
 Strong children of the Alpine wild
 Whose culture is the brethren's care;
 Of human tasks their only one,
 And cheerful works beneath the sun. 60

Those halls, too, destined to contain
 Each its own pilgrim-host of old,
 From England, Germany, or Spain, —
 All are before me! I behold
 The house, the brotherhood austere.
 And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
 And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
 Showed me the high, white star of Truth,
 There bade me gaze, and there aspire. 70
 Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
 What dost thou in this living tomb?

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
 At whose behest I long ago
 So much unlearned, so much resigned:
 I come not here to be your foe!
 I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
 To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
 But as, on some far northern strand, 80
 Thinking of his own Gods, a Greek
 In pity and mournful awe might stand
 Before some fallen Runic stone;
 For both were faiths, and both are gone.

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
 The other powerless to be born,
 With nowhere yet to rest my head,
 Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
 Their faith, my tears, the world deride:
 I come to shed them at their side. 90

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
 Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
 Take me, cowled forms, and fence me round,
 Till I possess my soul again;
 Till free my thoughts before me roll,
 Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries, your faith is now
 But a dead time's exploded dream;
 My melancholy, sciolists say,
 Is a passed mode, an outworn theme. — 100
 As if the world had ever had
 A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah! if it be passed, take away,
 At least, the restlessness, the pain!
 Be man henceforth no more a prey
 To these out-dated stings again!
 The nobleness of grief is gone:
 Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But, — if you cannot give us ease, —
 Last of the race of them who grieve, 110
 Here leave us to die out with these
 Last of the people who believe!
 Silent, while years engrave the brow;
 Silent — the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent,
 The kings of modern thought are dumb;
 Silent they are, though not content,
 And wait to see the future come.
 They have the grief men had of yore,
 But they contend and cry no more. 120

Our fathers watered with their tears
 This sea of time whereon we sail;
 Their voices were in all men's ears
 Who passed within their puissant hail.
 Still the same ocean round us raves,
 But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise
 And outcry of the former men?
 Say, have their sons achieved more joys?
 Say, is life lighter now than then? ¹³⁰
 The sufferers died, they left their pain;
 The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
 With haughty scorn which mocked the smart,
 Through Europe to the Ætolian shore
 The pageant of his bleeding heart?
 That thousands counted every groan,
 And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
 Carried thy lovely wail away, ¹⁴⁰
 Musical through Italian trees
 Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?
 Inheritors of thy distress,
 Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read,
 O Obermann! the sad, stern page,
 Which tells us how thou hid'st thy head
 From the fierce tempest of thine age
 In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
 Or chalets near the Alpine snow? ¹⁵⁰

Ye slumber in your silent grave! —
 The world, which for an idle day
 Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
 Long since have flung her weeds away,
 The eternal trifler breaks your spell;
 But we — we learnt your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
 More fortunate, alas! than we,
 Which without hardness will be sage,
 And gay without frivolity. ¹⁶⁰
 Sons of the world, oh! speed those years;
 But, while we wait, allow our tears!

Allow them! We admire with awe
 The exulting thunder of your race;
 You give the universe your law,
 You triumph over time and space:

Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
 We praise them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade
 Beneath some old-world abbey wall, ¹⁷⁰
 Forgotten in a forest-glade,
 And secret from the eyes of all.
 Deep, deep the greenwood round them
 waves,
 Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream,
 Oft through the trees they catch a glance
 Of passing troops in the sun's beam, —
 Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance;
 Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
 To life, to cities, and to war. ¹⁸⁰

And through the woods, another way,
 Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
 Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
 Round some old forest-lodge at morn.
 Gay dames are there, in sylvan green;
 Laughter and cries — those notes between!

The banners flashing through the trees
 Make their blood dance, and chain their
 eyes;
 That bugle-music on the breeze
 Arrests them with a charmed surprise. ¹⁹⁰
 Banner by turns and bugle woo:
 Ye shy recluses, follow too!

O children, what do ye reply?
 "Action and pleasure, will ye roam
 Through these secluded dells to cry
 And call us? but too late ye come!
 Too late for us your call ye blow,
 Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave;
 We watch those yellow tapers shine, ²⁰⁰
 Emblems of hope over the grave,
 In the high altar's depth divine.
 The organ carries to our ear
 Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round
 Of revery, of shade, of prayer,
 How should we grow in other ground?
 How can we flower in foreign air?
 — Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
 And leave our desert to its peace!" ²¹⁰

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

[First published in 1833; much altered in 1842.]

PART I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 20
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd, 20
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early 30
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly
Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.

She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay 40
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot; 50
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed: 70
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot;
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

99

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.

110

Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining

121

Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance

130

Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot; 14
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

150

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 16
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:

But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

17

CENONE

[First printed 1833; materially altered 1842.]

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart
the glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Ænone, wandering, forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade 20
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;
The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.

The purple flower droops, the golden bee
Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aware of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, 40
A cloud that gather'd shape; for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills;
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine.
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, 50
white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft;
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone; white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens 60
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart:

"My own Ænone,
Beautiful-browed Ænone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind in-graven 70
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, "This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose fend, with question unto whom 't were due; 80

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnoon; one silvery
 cloud 90
 Had lost his way between the piny sides
 Of this long gleu. Then to the bower they
 came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded
 bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
 And overhead the waudering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and
 thro'. 100

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and
 leau'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her to
 whom
 Coming thro' heaven, like a light that
 grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110
 Wherewith to embellish state, "from many
 a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with
 corn,
 Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honor," she said, "and homage, tax and
 toll,
 From many an inland town and haven
 large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing cita-
 del
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake of
 power,

"Which in all action is the end of all; 120
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
 And throned of wisdom — from all neigh-
 bor crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon
 from me,
 From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee
 king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in
 power
 Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought
 of power
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she
 stood
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry
 cheek 140
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-
 control,
 These three alone lead life to sovereign
 power.
 Yet not for power (power of herself
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by
 law,
 Acting the law we live by without fear;
 And, because right is right, to follow right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me 150
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
 So shalt thou find me fairest. Yet, indeed,
 If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
 Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee sure
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to
 thee,
 So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,

To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown
will, 168

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commensure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful, 170
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian
wells,

With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep
hair

Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder; from the violets her light
foot

Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, 180
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in
Greece."

She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my sight for
fear;

But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden clond,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful
tail

Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving
is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my
arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot lips
preat

Close, close to thine in that quick-falling
dew 200

Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy
ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark
morn 209

The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Cenone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling
stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the
glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came 220
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak
my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
times,

In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with
tears? 230

O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy heaven, how canst thou see my
face?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear my
weight?

O death, death, death, thou ever-floating
cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die. 240

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and
more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Death sounds at night come from the in-
most hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder
comes

Across me: never child be born of me, 250
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound 260
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE LOTOS-EATERS

[First printed 1833; altered in 1842.]

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward
the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shore-
ward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did
swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary
dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the
moon;

And, like a downward smoke, the slender
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall
did deem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward
smoke, 10
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did
go;

And some thro' wavering lights and shad-
ows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three moun-
tain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with
showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the
dale 20

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the
same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted
stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them 30
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the

grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did

make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-
more 40

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the
oar,

Weary the wandering fields of barren
foam.

Then some one said, 'We will return no
more;'

And all at once they sang, 'Our island
home

Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls

Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls

Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,

And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?

All things have rest: why should we toil alone,

We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;

Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is their any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave

In silence — ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,

With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;

To muse and brood and live again in memory,

With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change;

For surely now our household hearths are cold,

Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold

Have eat our substance, and the minstrel
sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?

Let what is broken so remain. 80

The Gods are hard to reconcile;
'T is hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the
pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blowing
lowly —

With half-dropt eyelid still, 90

Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing
slowly

His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined
vine —

To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath di-
vine!

Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling
brine,

Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out be-
neath the pine. 99

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mel-
lower tone;

Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yel-
low Lotus-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of mo-
tion we,

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when
the surge was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his
foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an
equal mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie re-
clined

On the hills like Gods together, careless of
mankind. 110

For they lie beside their nectar, and the
bolts are hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the
clouds are lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with
the gleaming world;

Where they smile in secret, looking over
wasted lauds,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
roaring deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and
sinking ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred
in a doleful song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
tale of wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the
words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
cleave the soil, 120

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with
enduring toil,

Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and
wine and oil;

Till they perish and they suffer — some, 't is
whisper'd — down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian
valleys dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of
asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than
toil, the shore

Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar;

O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not
wander more.

ULYSSES

[First printed in 1842, and unaltered.]

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren
crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and
dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know
not me.

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have en-
joy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with
those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and
when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of
men

And manners, climates, councils, govern-
ments,

Myself not least, but honor'd of them all, —
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose mar-
gin fades 20

For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled
on life

Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard
myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle, —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I
mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her
sail;

There gloom the dark, broad seas. My
mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and
thought with me, —

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and I
are old;

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. 50
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with
Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs;
the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends.

'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose
holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old
days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we
are, we are, —

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield. 70

TITHONUS

[First printed in 1860; afterwards included in
the 'Enoch Arden' volume in 1864.]

THE woods decay, the woods decay and
fall,

The vapors weep their burthen to the
ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies be-
neath,

And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a
dream

The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of
morn. 10

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he
seem'd

To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a
smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they
give.

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd
their wills,

And beat me down and marr'd and wasted
me,

And tho' they could not end me, left me
maim'd ²⁰

To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,

And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,

Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with
tears

To hear me? Let me go; take back thy
gift.

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,

Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance ³⁰
Where all should pause, as is most meet
for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there
comes

A glimpse of that dark world where I was
born.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer
steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy shoul-
ders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to reddens thro' the gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to
mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,
arise, ⁴⁰

And shake the darkness from their loosen'd
manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.
Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful

In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?

'The Gods themselves cannot recall their
gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another
heart ⁵⁰

In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —

The lucid outline forming round thee; saw

The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt
my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,

Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-
warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd

Whispering I knew not what of wild and
sweet, ⁶⁰

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?

Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the
steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the
homes

Of happy men that have the power to die. ⁷⁰
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.

Release me, and restore me to the ground.
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my

grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,

I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

[First published in the 'Holy Grail' volume.]

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower — but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

[First printed in 1842, and unaltered.]

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;

But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !
Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

SONGS

[From *The Princess*]

I

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O, we fell out, I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O, there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

II

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.

III

THE splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

IV

'TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine de-
spair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no
more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy
feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more !'

V

HOME they brought her warrior dead ;
She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior septe,
 Took the face-cloth from the face;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee —
 Like summer tempest came her tears —
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

VI

'COME down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),

In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?

But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
 To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;

And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
 For Love is of the valley, come thou down

And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
 Or hand in hand with Fleuty in the maize,

Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
 Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk

With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
 Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,

That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.

But follow; let the torrent dance thee down

To find him in the valley; let the wild
 Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave

The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
 There thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air.

So waste not thou, but come; for all the vales

Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I

Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,

And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

'In Memoriam' was first published in 1850. No changes were made in the second and third editions. In the fourth edition (1851) the present 59th section ('O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me?') was added. The present 39th section ('Old warder of these buried bones,' etc.) was added in the 'Miniature Edition' of the 'Poems' (1871).

Arthur Henry Hallam, to whose memory the poem is a tribute, was the son of Henry Hallam, the historian, and was born in London, February 1, 1811. In 1818 he spent some months with his parents in Italy and Switzerland, where he became familiar with the French language, which he had already learned to read with ease. Latin he also learned to read with facility in little more than a year. When only eight or nine years old, he began to write tragedies which showed remarkable precocity.

After a brief course in a preparatory school he was sent to Eton, where he remained till 1827. He did not distinguish himself as a classical scholar, being more interested in English literature, especially the earlier dramatists. He took an active part in the Debating Society, where he showed great power in argumentative discussion; and during his last year in the school he began to write for the 'Eton Miscellany.' After leaving Eton he spent eight months with his parents in Italy, where he mastered the language and the works of Dante and Petrarch.

In October, 1829, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. There he soon became acquainted with the Tennysons, and thus began the ever-memorable friendship of which 'In Memoriam' is the monument. Like his friends, he was the pupil of the Rev. William Whewell. In 1831 he obtained the first prize for an English declamation on the conduct of the Independent party during the Civil War. In consequence of this success, he was called upon to deliver an oration in the chapel before the Christmas vacation, and chose as a subject the influence of Italian upon English literature. He also gained a prize for an English essay on the philosophical writings of Cicero.

He left Cambridge on taking his degree in January, 1832. He resided from that time with his father in London in 67 Wimpole Street, referred to in 'In Memoriam,' vii. :—

Dark house, by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street.

Arthur used to say to his friends, 'You know you will always find us at sixes and sevens.' At the earnest desire of his father he applied himself vigorously to the study of law in the Inner Temple, entering, in the month of October, 1832, the office of an eminent conveyancer, with whom he continued till his departure from England in the following summer.

His father tells the remainder of the sad story very briefly. Arthur accompanied him to Germany in the beginning of August. In returning to Vienna from Pesth, a wet day probably gave rise to an intermittent fever with very slight symptoms, which were apparently subsiding, when a sudden rush of blood to the head caused his death on the 15th of September, 1833. It appeared on examination that the cerebral vessels were weak, and that there was a lack of energy in the heart. In the usual chances of humanity a few more years would probably have been fatal.

His 'loved remains' were brought to England and interred on the 3d of January, 1834, in Clevedon Church, Somersetshire, belonging to his maternal grandfather, Sir Abraham Elton. The place was selected by his father not only from its connection with the family, but also from its sequestered situation on a lone hill overlooking the Bristol Channel.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.
1849.

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground.

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
 Who changest not in any gale,
 Nor branding summer suns avail
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fail from out my blood
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
 A web is woven across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands —
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own, —
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is bondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darken'd eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;

For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
 But that large grief which these en-
 fold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'other friends remain,'
 That 'loss is common to the race' —
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more.
 Too common! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son,
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest;
 And thinking 'this will please him
 best,'
 She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee

And this poor flower of poesy
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailedst the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine,
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bow-
ers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall,
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go, I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air,
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return

To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have preat and
closed,
Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sail,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine,
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day;
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which avert
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a laboring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have fallen from
 me ?

Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or Sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or storm,
 But knows no more of transient form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink ?
 And stunn'd me from my power to think
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan ?

XVII

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week; the days go by;
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
 And balmy drops in summer dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by thee,
 The dust of him I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII

'T is well; 't is something; we may stand
 Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'T is little; but it looks in truth
 As if the quiet bones were blest
 Among familiar names to rest
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the
 head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
 And come, whatever loves to weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,
 I, falling on his faithful heart,
 Would breathing thro' his lips impart
 The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,
 The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind.
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
'How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.'

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers: 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon ?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;
Ye never knew the sacred dust.
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it
ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb,
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far,
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life, — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in
twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it, for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built —

O, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see — in Him is no before —
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'T is better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a boy;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with
 joy,
 The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With shower'd largess of delight
 In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,
 Make one wreath more for Use and
 Wont,
 That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new—
 Why should they miss their yearly
 due
 Before their time? 'They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
 We gamboll'd, making vain pretences
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;
 We heard them sweep the winter land;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet.
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is
 sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: 'They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house return'd,
 Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four
 days?'
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling what it is to die
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
He told it not, or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer
air,

Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays
Her early heaven, her happy views ;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good.
O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die ;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
'The cheeks drop in, the body bows ;
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust ;'

Might I not say ? ' Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and
more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case ? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the
grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI

The' truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,
 When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the
 wave
 In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
 'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek:
 'I am not worthy even to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart,
 And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine, —
 And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said, —

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,
 And loiter'd in the master's field,
 And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
 And answering now my random stroke
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
 To thee too comes the golden hour
 When flower is feeling after flower;
 But Sorrow, — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men, —
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face,
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her
boast,

Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher,
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death,
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
He still outstript me in the race;

It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows ?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its interval gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times — he knows not
whence —
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years —
If Death so taste Lethean springs —
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt:
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is prest
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that 'this is I;'

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'
 And finds 'I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch.'

To rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may be-
 gin,
 As thro' the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge shall
 bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd,
 The fruitful hours of still increase;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
 Should move his rounds, and fusing
 all
 The skirts of self again, should fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.
 Eternal form shall still divide

The eternal soul from all beside;
 And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good.
 What vaster dream can hit the mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
 'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
 Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may fit,
 And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
 But better serves a wholesome law,
 And holds it sin and shame to draw
 The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shiver'd lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
 The slightest air of song shall breathe
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencill'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves
 prick
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
 And weave their petty calls and dia.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
 Should still be near us at our side ?
 Is there no baseness we would hide ?
 No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
 I had such reverence for his blame,
 See with clear eye some hidden shame
 And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith ?
 There must be wisdom with great Death;
 The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall;
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
 With larger other eyes than ours,
 To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved;
 My words are only words, and moved
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
 The Spirit of true love replied;
 'Thou canst not move me from thy
 side,
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears ?
 What record ? not the sinless years
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue;

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
 Abide; thy wealth is gather'd in,
 When 'Time hath sunder'd shell from
 pearl.'

LIII

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
 The grain by which a man may live ?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a truth
 To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good, define it well;
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and be
 Procureess to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last — far off — at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I ?
 An infant crying in the night;

An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

'So careful of the type ?' but no.
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who buffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
O for thy voice to soothe and bless !
What hope of answer, or redress ?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song.
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind.
Methinks my friend is richly shrimed;
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be ?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good ?

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howso'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone;
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by;
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I !
How should he love a thing so low ?'

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replied
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame

Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my
breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not
Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillé to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost;
The streets were black with smoke and
frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door;

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorn
From youth and babe and hoary hair:
They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
I found an angel of the night;

The voice was low, the look was bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled.

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf;
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning
doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long present of the past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlost, issuing out of night,

With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro'
time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning
star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath
I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.

What practice howsoever expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of
song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bow-
ers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that
lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something
else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain —
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die !
 No — mixt with all this mystic frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,' —
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
 I know thee of what force thou art
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
 As moulded like in Nature's mint;
 And hill and wood and field did print
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
 Thro' all his eddying coves, the same
 All winds that roam the twilight came
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died
 Had moved me kindly from his side,
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,
 A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks,
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,
 'My love shall now no further range;

There cannot come a mellowed change,
 For now is love mature in ear' ?

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
 What end is here to my complaint ?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
 'More years had made me love thee
 more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks;
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth;
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart;
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long;
 Thon doest expectant Nature wrong;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
 Thy sweetness from its proper place ?
 Can trouble live with April days,
 Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
 That longs to burst a frozen bud
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow
 To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
 For now the day was drawing on,
 When thou shouldst link thy life with
 one
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange flower,
 Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
 I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
 The lips of men with honest praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous hours
 Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought,
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
 As link'd with thine in love and fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
 To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land

Would reach us out the shining hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
 The old bitterness again, and break
 The low beginnings of content?

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
 And whether love for him have drain'd
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather in the eyecled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little
 worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of
 him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow
brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall:
'T is hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and
Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear

We lent him. Who but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this fat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and
height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling
courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,

The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where highest heaven, who first could
fling
This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise.

'T was well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat
That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm.
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;

And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name,
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would
hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;

And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at
ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their
green,
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the
past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time — the shocks of
Chance —

The blows of Death. At length my
trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at
ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and
death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,

Which makes the darkness and the
light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —
I look'd on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss;
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
'I cannot understand; I love.'

XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me;
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lastier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged caves
A song that alights the coming care,

And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

C

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall away,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of
seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spices the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the Lesser Wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CH

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go; my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me; distant hills

From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever. Then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wail'd, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the
banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander space,
The maidens gather'd strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, war'd in every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
'We served thee here,' they said, 'so
long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
 And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand:
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows:
 There in due time the woodbine blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and mime;
 For change of place, like growth of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;

No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the
wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years;
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were
thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown,—

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye
 Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why
 I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too much,
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest made,
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise:

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill

To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall
 rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper! Who shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
 She cannot fight the fear of death.
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain, and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O friend, who earnest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greenening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too, and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and
 takes
 The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone,
 And that dear voice, I once have known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead,
 Less yearning for the friendship fled
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
 And unto meeting, when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant laboring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to
 clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
 Move upward, working out the beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn

A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars hath
been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,

And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,
She did but look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth;

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within the court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that
hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, even tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags!
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And sunniest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new —
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal,
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not
 die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them
 pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he loved
 A daughter of our house, nor proved
 Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
 Some thrice three years; they went and
 came,
 Remade the blood and changed the
 frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set,
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are flown,
 For I myself with these have grown
 To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere noon?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blisful eyes
 And then on thee; they meet thy look
 And brighten like the star that shook
 Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
 As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent; wearing all that weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,

That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and again
The 'Wilt thou?' ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn.
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses wait;

They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the
wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire.
Dumb is that tower which spake so
loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and
spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man that with me trod
 This planet was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

SONGS

[From *Maud*]

I

I

COME into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she
 loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky, 10
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon;
 All night has the casement jessamine
 stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune;
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,
 With whom she has heart to be gay. 20
 When will the dancers leave her alone ?
 She is weary of dance and play.'
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;

Low on the sand and low on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
 In babble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine ?
 But mine, but mine,' so I swear to the rose,
 'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my
 blood,
 As the music clash'd in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall
 From the lake to the meadow and on to
 the wood,
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII

From the meadow your walks have left so
 sweet
 That whenever a March-wind sighs 10
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet
 In violets blue as your eyes,
 To the woody hollows in which we meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for your
 sake,
 Knowing your promise to me; 20
 The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one;
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with
 curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate. 10
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;
 She is coming, my life, my fate.

The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'

And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'

The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'

And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;

Were it ever so airy a tread,

My heart would hear her and beat,

Were it earth in an earthy bed;

My dust would hear her and beat,

Had I lain for a century dead,

Would start and tremble under her feet,

And blossom in purple and red.

II

I

O that 't were possible

After long grief and pain

To find the arms of my true love

Round me once again!

II

When I was wont to meet her

In the silent woody places

By the home that gave me birth,

We stood tranced in long embraces

Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter

Than anything on earth.

III

A shadow flits before me,

Not thou, but like to thee.

Ah, Christ, that it were possible

For one short hour to see

The souls we loved, that they might
tell us

What and where they be!

IV

It leads me forth at evening,

It lightly winds and steals

In a cold white robe before me,

When all my spirit reels

At the shouts, the leagues of lights,

And the roaring of the wheels.

V

Half the night I waste in sighs,

Half in dreams I sorrow after

The delight of early skies;

In a wakeful doze I sorrow

For the hand, the lips, the eyes,

For the meeting of the morrow,

The delight of happy laughter,

The delight of low replies.

VI

'T is a morning pure and sweet,

And a dewy splendor falls

On the little flower that clings

To the turrets and the walls;

'T is a morning pure and sweet,

And the light and shadow fleet.

She is walking in the meadow,

And the woodland echo rings;

In a moment we shall meet.

She is singing in the meadow,

And the rivulet at her feet

Ripples on in light and shadow

To the ballad that she sings.

VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,

My bird with the shining head,

My own dove with the tender eye?

But there rings on a sudden a passion-
ate cry,

There is some one dying or dead,

And a sullen thunder is roll'd;

For a tumult shakes the city,

And I wake, my dream is fled.

In the shuddering dawn, behold,

Without knowledge, without pity,

By the curtains of my bed

That abiding phantom cold!

VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,

Mix not memory with doubt,

Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,

Pass and cease to move about!

'T is the blot upon the brain

That will show itself without.

IX

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,

And the yellow vapors choke

The great city sounding wide;

The day comes, a dull red ball

Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke

On the misty river-tide.

X

Thro' the hubbub of the market

I steal, a wasted frame;

It crosses here, it crosses there,

Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall !

XII

Would the happy spirit descend
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest' ?

XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me.
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

This poem, originally published on the day of the Duke's funeral in 1852, was probably written in some haste. It underwent considerable revision before it was reprinted in 1853, and was further retouched before it appeared with 'Maud' in 1855.

I

BURY the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation;
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
nation;
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we de-
plore ?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the past
No more in soldier fashion will he gree:
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men
drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fallen at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the wind
that blew !
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be
seen no more.

V

All is over and done.
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever

among the wise and the bold.
 æt the bell be toll'd,
 and a reverent people behold
 the towering car, the sable steeds.
 bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
 dark in its funeral fold.
 æt the bell be toll'd,
 and a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
 and the sound of the sorrowing anthem
 roll'd 60

'thro' the dome of the golden cross;
 and the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
 he knew their voices of old.
 'or many a time in many a clime
 his captain's-ear has heard them boom
 bellowing victory, bellowing doom.
 When he with those deep voices wrought,
 guarding realms and kings from shame,
 With those deep voices our dead captain
 taught

'he tyrant, and asserts his claim 70
 n that dread sound to the great name
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 n praise and in dispraise the same,
 n man of well-attemper'd frame.
 'o civic muse, to such a name,
 'o such a name for ages long,
 'o such a name,
 'reserve a broad approach of fame,
 and ever-echoing avenues of song!

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd
guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier
and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my
rest ?' —
lighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
'hine island loves thee well, thou famous
man,
'he greatest sailor since our world began.
'ow, to the roll of muffled drums,
'o thee the greatest soldier comes;
or this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
[is foes were thine; he kept us free;
' give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
and worthy to be laid by thee;
'or this is England's greatest son,
le that gain'd a hundred fights,
'or ever lost an English gun;
'his is he that far away

Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won; 100
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms, 110
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing
wings, 120
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler
down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square,
Their surging charges foam'd themselves
away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and over-
threw. 130
So great a soldier taught us there
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine, 139
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by
thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim

With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name. 150

VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else there nobler dreams forget,

Confused by brainless mobs and lawless
Powers,
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly
set

His Briton in blown seas and storming
showers,

We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept
it ours.

And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!

O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the
soul 160

Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there
springs

Our loyal passion for our temperate kings!
For, saying that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of
mind,

Till crowds at length be sane and crowns
be just.

But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.

Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who
spoke;

Who never sold the truth to serve the
hour, 179

Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one re-
buke

All great self-seekers trampling on the
right.

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
named;

Truth lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light 179
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great
But as he saves or serves the state. 180
Not once or twice in our rough island-
story

The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory. 185
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and back,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has
won

His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure
Let his great example stand 190
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman
pure;

Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory.
And let the land whose hearths he saved
from shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name. 195

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet un moulded tongue

Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one upon whose hand and heart and
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.

Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:

We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.

For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will,
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
roll

Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's
ears;

The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs
and tears;

The black earth yawns; the mortal disap-
pears;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great. —

Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave
him.

Speak no more of this renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him !

IDYLLS OF THE KING

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*' — JOSEPH OF EXETER

DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory — since he held
them dear,

Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
'Who revered his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;
Who loved one only and who clave to
her —'

Her — over all whose realms to their last
isle,
Commingled with the gloom of imminent
war,

The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost him;
he is gone.

We know him now; all narrow jealousies
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that;
Not making his high place the lawless
perch

Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of
years

Wearing the white flower of a blameless
life,

Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a
throne

And blackens every blot; for where is he
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his ?
Or how should England dreaming of his
sons

Hope more for these than some inheritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —

Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still
endure;
Break not, for thou art royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside thee that ye
made
One light together, but has past and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee,
The love of all thy sons encompass thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,
The love of all thy people comfort thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the king of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other
child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle and, ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen
host
Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what was
left.
And so there grew great tracts of wilder-
ness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and
more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and
died,
And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom
one.
And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table
Round,
Drew all their petty principedoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm and
reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was
waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast
therein,
And none or few to scare or chase the
beast;
So that wild dog and wolf and boar and
bear
Came night and day, and rooted in the
fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce
teat
To human sucklings; and the children,
housed
In her foul den, there at their meat would
growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like
men,
Worse than the wolves. And King Leo-
dogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again
And Cæsar's eagle. Then his brother king,
Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth
with blood,
And on the spike that split the mother's
heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But — for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son' — the
King
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us
thou!
For here between the man and beast we
die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed &
arms,
But heard the call and came; and Guine-
vere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.
 But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
 Felt the light of her eyes into his life
 Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
 pitch'd
 His tents beside the forest. Then he drave
 The heathen; after, slew the beast, and
 fell'd
 The forest, letting in the sun, and made 60
 Broad pathways for the hunter and the
 knight,
 And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
 A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
 Of those great lords and barons of his realm
 Flash'd forth and into war; for most of
 these,
 Colleguing with a score of petty kings,
 Made head against him, crying: 'Who is
 he
 That he should rule us? who hath proven
 him
 King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
 And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor
 voice, 70
 Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
 This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;
 This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt
 Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
 Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere,
 And thinking as he rode: 'Her father said
 That there between the man and beast they
 die.

Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
 Up to my throne and side by side with me?
 What happiness to reign a lonely king, 81
 Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,
 O earth that soundest hollow under me,
 Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be
 join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,
 I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
 And cannot will my will nor work my work
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine own
 realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd with
 her,

Then might we live together as one life, 90
 And reigning with one will in everything
 Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
 And power on this dead world to make it
 live.'

Thereafter— as he speaks who tells the
 tale—

When Arthur reach'd a field of battle
 bright

With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world
 Was all so clear about him that he saw
 The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
 And even in high day the morning star. 9
 So when the King had set his banner broad
 At once from either side, with trumpet
 blast,

And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto
 blood,

The long-lanced battle let their horses run.
 And now the barons and the kings pre-
 vail'd,

And now the King, as here and there that
 war

Went swaying; but the Powers who walk
 the world

Made lightnings and great thunders over
 him,

And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main
 might,

And mightier of his hands with every blow,
 And leading all his knighthood threw the
 kings, 110

Carados, Urien, Cradlefont of Wales,
 Claudius, and Clariance of Northumber-
 land,

The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
 With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
 And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice
 As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
 To one who sins, and deems himself alone
 And all the world asleep, they swerved and
 brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
 brands

That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho! they
 yield!' 120

So like a painted battle the war stood
 Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
 And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.
 He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved
 And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not doubt
 me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for me to-
 day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of
 God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field.
 I know thee for my King!' Whereat the
 two,

For each had warded either in the fight,

Swore on the field of death a deathless
love.
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in
man;
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the
death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field he
sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,
Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee
well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in
heart
Debating — 'How should I that am a king,
However much he help me at my need, ¹⁴¹
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?' — lifted his voice, and
call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of Ar-
thur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and
said:
'Sir King, there be but two old men that
know;
And each is twice as old as I; and one ¹⁴⁹
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art, and one
Is Merlin's master — so they call him —
Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the scholar
ran
Before the master, and so far that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and
wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied:
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day, ¹⁶¹
Then beast and man had had their share of
me;
But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the
king said:

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by ¹⁶⁶
fowl,
And reason in the chase; but wherefore
now
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake —
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the
King —

'Sir, there be many rumors on this head;
For there be those who hate him in their
hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are
sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than
man;
And there be those who deem him more
than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven. But my
belief
In all this matter — so ye care to learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that
held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne;
And daughters had she borne him, — one
whereof,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;
But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love
That Gorlois and King Uther went to war,
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
And there was none to call to but himself.
So, compass'd by the power of the king,
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
And with a shameful swiftness; afterward,
Not many moons, King Uther died him-
self,

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to
wrack.

And that same night, the night of the new
year,

By reason of the bitterness and grief ²⁰⁹
That vext his mother, all before his time
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
To Merlin, to be holden far apart
Until his hour should come, because the
lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of
this,

Wild beasts, and surely would have torn
the child

Piecemeal among them, had they known;
for each

But sought to rule for his own self and
hand,

And many hated Uther for the sake
Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the
child, ²²⁰

And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight
And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him
with her own;

And no man knew. And ever since the
lords

Have foughten like wild beasts among
themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack; but
now,

This year, when Merlin — for his hour had
come —

Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the
hall,

Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your
king,"

A hundred voices cried: "Away with
him!" ²³⁰

No king of ours! a son of Gorlois he,
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,
Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his
craft,

And while the people clamor'd for a king,
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great
lords

Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the king debated with him-
self

If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
Or born the son of Gorlois after death, ²³⁹
Or Uther's son and born before his time,

Or whether there were truth in anything
Said by these three, there came to Came-
liard,

With Gawain and young Modred, her two
sons,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-
cent;

Whom as he could, not as he would, the
king

Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
meat:

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his
men

Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye this
king —

So many those that hate him, and so
strong, ²⁵⁰

So few his knights, however brave they
be —

Hath body enow to hold his foemen
down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell
thee: few,

Few, but all brave, all of one mind with
him;

For I was near him when the savage yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat
Crowned on the dais, and his warriors
cried,

"Be thou the king, and we will work thy
will

Who love thee." Then the King in low
deep tones,

And simple words of great authority, ²⁶⁰
Bound them by so strait vows to his own
self

That when they rose, knighted from kneel-
ing, some

Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who
wakes

Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake, and cheer'd his
Table Round

With large, divine, and comfortable words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
A momentary likeness of the King; ²⁷⁰

And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote

Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair queens
Who stood in silence near his throne, the
friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose
vast wit

And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

'And near him stood the Lady of the
Lake,

Who knows a subtler magic than his
own —

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the King his huge cross-hilted
sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out. A mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep — calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world — and when the sur-
face rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like our
Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it —
rich

With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so
bright

That men are blinded by it — on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this
world,

"Take me," but turn the blade and ye
shall see,

And written in the speech ye speak your-
self,

"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's
face

Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast
away

Is yet far-off." So this great brand the
king

Took, and by this will beat his foemen
down.

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,

'The swallow and the swift are near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble prince,
Being his own dear sister;' and she said,
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd the
king.

She answer'd, 'These be secret things,
and sign'd

To those two sons to pass, and let them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking into song
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw;
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
And there half-heard — the same that after-
ward

Struck for the throne, and striking found
his doom.

And then the Queen made answer:
'What know I?

For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
Was Gorlois; yea, and dark was Uther
too,

Wellnigh to blackness; but this king is
fair

Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
Moreover, always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
"O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the
world."

'Ay,' said the king, 'and hear ye such
a cry?
But when did Arthur chance upon thee
first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell
thee true.

He found me first when yet a little maid.
Beaten I had been for a little fault;
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
And flung myself down on a bank of heath.
And hated this fair world and all therein,
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead;
and he —

I know not whether of himself he came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can
walk

Unseen at pleasure — he was at my side,

And spake sweet words, and comforted my
heart,³⁴⁸
And dried my tears, being a child with me.
And many a time he came, and evermore
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved him
not,
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.
And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for
me,
For then I surely thought he would be
king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleya, our Merlin's master, as they
say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,³⁶⁰
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the
mage;
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died; and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still king, and passing forth to
breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night—a
night³⁷⁰
In which the bounds of heaven and earth
were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape
thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to
stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the
two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great
sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the
last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the
deep³⁷⁹
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;
And down the wave and in the flame was
borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stooped and caught the babe, and cried,
"The King!

Here is an heir for Uther!" And the
fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the
strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in
fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,³⁹⁰
Free sky and stars. "And this same child,"
he said,
"Is he who reigns; nor could I part in
peace
Till this were told." And saying this the
seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of
death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were
truth—
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd
me⁴⁰⁰
In riddling triplets of old time, and said:—

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the
sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the
lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

"Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom
blows;
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he
goes."⁴¹⁰

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but
thou
Fear not to give this King thine only
child,
Guinevere; so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of
men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he will not
die, ⁴²⁰
But pass, again to come, and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their
king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept,
and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,
Now looming, and now lost; and on the
slope ⁴³⁰

The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was
driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof
and rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with
the haze

And made it thicker; while the phantom
king

Sent out at times a voice; and here or there
Stood one who pointed toward the voice,
the rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of
ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'
Till with a wink his dream was changed,
the haze ⁴⁴⁰

Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, but the King stood out in hea-
ven,

Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering
yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom
he loved

And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride
forth

And bring the Queen, and watch'd him
from the gates;

And Lancelot past away among the flow-
ers — ⁴⁴⁹

For then was latter April — and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guine-
vere.

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high
saint,

Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the
King

That morn was married, while in staines
white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his
knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro' open
door,

The sacred altar blossom'd white with
May, ⁴⁵⁰

The sun of May descended on their King.
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their
Queen,

Roll'd incense, and there past along the
hymns

A voice as of the waters, while the two
Swore at the shrine of Christ a deathless
love.

And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is
mine.

Let chance what will, I love thee to the
death!'

To whom the Queen replied with drooping
eyes,

'King and my lord, I love thee to the
death!'

And holy Dubric spread his hands and
spake: ⁴⁵⁵

'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the
world

Other, and may thy Queen be one with
thee,

And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the
shrine

Great lords from Rome before the portal
stood,

In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
Then while they paced a city all on fire

With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets
blew,

And Arthur's knighthood sang before the
King: — ⁴⁶⁰

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with
May!

Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world — "Let the King
reign!"

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
 Clash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon
 helm,
 all battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the
 King reign!

'Strike for the King and live! his knights
 have heard
 that God hath told the King a secret word.
 all battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the
 King reign!

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the
 dust.
 Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the
 lust!
 Clash battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
 King reign!

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou
 diest,
 the King is king, and ever wills the high-
 est.
 Clash battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
 King reign!

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
 Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
 Clash battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
 King reign!

'The King will follow Christ, and we the
 King,
 to whom high God hath breathed a secret
 thing. 300

Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
 King reign!

So sang the knighthood, moving to their
 hall.

There at the banquet those great lords from
 Rome,

The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
 Strode in and claim'd their tribute as of
 yore.

But Arthur spake: 'Behold, for these have
 sworn

To wage my wars, and worship me their
 King;

The old order changeth, yielding place to
 new,

And we that fight for our fair father
 Christ, 509

Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
 To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
 No tribute will we pay.' So those great
 lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove
 with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a
 space

Were all one will, and thro' that strength
 the King

Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
 Fought, and in twelve great battles over-
 came

The heathen hordes, and made a realm and
 reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE
 THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT
 GERAINT AND ENID
 BALIN AND BALAN
 MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE
 THE HOLY GRAIL
 PELLEAS AND ETARRE
 THE LAST TOURNAMENT
 GUINEVERE

GARETH AND LYNETTE

HE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
 and tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
 started at the spate. A slender-shafted
 pine
 lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
 How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a
 false knight
 for evil king before my lance, if lance

Were mine to use — O senseless cataract,
 Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
 And yet thou art but swollen with cold
 snows
 And mine is living blood. Thou dost His
 will, 10
 The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that
 know,
 Have strength and wit, in my good mother's
 hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled
to —

Since the good mother holds me still a
child!

Good mother is bad mother unto me!

A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous
prayer,

Until she let me fly disengaged to sweep 20
In ever-highering eagle-circles up

To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
swoop

Down upon all things base, and dash them
dead,

A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when
he came

With Modred hither in the summer-time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
knight.

Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me," said
so — he — 30

Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is alway sullen — what care I?'

And Gareth went, and hovering round
her chair

Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the
child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child?' She
laugh'd,

'Thou art but a wild-geese to question it.'

'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he
said,

'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-
beloved,

An 't were but of the goose and golden
eggs.' 40

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling
eyes:

'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of
mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the
palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw

The splendor sparkling from aloft, and
thought,

"An I could climb and lay my hand upon
it,

Then were I wealthier than a leash of
kings."

But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb
One that had loved him from his childhood
caught

And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break
thy neck,

I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his
neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away.'

To whom the mother said
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself
and climb'd,
And handed down the golden treasure to
him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling
eyes:

'Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he, 50
she,

Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — had the thing I spake of
been

Mere gold — but this was all of that true
steel

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the
nest,

That sent him from his senses. Let me
go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and
said:

'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory.
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies
there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburialable,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks,
nor knows.

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love

I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.
 Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the
 bird,
 And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the
 wars,
 Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
 Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often
 chance
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and tour-
 ney-falls,
 Frights to my heart. But stay; follow the
 deer 89
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;
 So make thy manhood mightier day by
 day.
 Sweet is the chase; and I will seek thee out
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone
 year,
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
 I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy
 than man.'

Then Gareth: 'An ye hold me yet for
 child,
 Hear yet once more the story of the child.
 For, mother, there was once a king, like
 ours. 100
 The prince his heir, when tall and mar-
 riageable,
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the king
 Set two before him. One was fair, strong,
 arm'd—
 But to be won by force—and many men
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man de-
 sired.
 And these were the conditions of the king:
 That save he won the first by force, he
 needs
 Must wed that other, whom no man de-
 sired,
 A red-faced bride who knew herself so
 vile 109
 That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—
 Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died
 of her.
 And one—they call'd her Fame; and one
 —O mother,'
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you?—
 Shame.
 Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the
 King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow
 the King—
 Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said:
 'Sweet son, for there be many who deem
 him not,
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven
 king—
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King 120
 When I was frequent with him in my youth,
 And heard him kingly speak, and doubted
 him
 No more than he, himself; but felt him
 mine,
 Of closest kin to me. Yet—wilt thou leave
 Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine
 all,
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven king?
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round his
 birth
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly: 'Not an
 hour, 130
 So that ye yield me—I will walk thro'
 fire,
 Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.
 Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd
 Rome
 From off the threshold of the realm, and
 crush'd
 The idolaters, and made the people free?
 Who should be king save him who makes
 us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had sought
 in vain
 To break him from the intent to which he
 grew,
 Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
 She answer'd craftily: 'Will ye walk thro'
 fire? 140
 Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the
 smoke.
 Ay, go then, an ye must; only one proof,
 Before thou ask the King to make thee
 knight,
 Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
 Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried:
 'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
 Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the
 quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at him:
 'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
 And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks ¹⁵⁰
 Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
 And those that hand the dish across the bar.
 Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
 And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when her son
 Beheld his only way to glory lead
 Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
 Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
 To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
 Closed in her castle from the sound of arms. ¹⁶⁰

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied:
 'The thrall in person may be free in soul,
 And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
 And, since thou art my mother, must obey.
 I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
 For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
 To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
 Nor tell my name to any — no, not the King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
 Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
 And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd, ¹⁷¹
 Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour
 When, waken'd by the wind which with full voice
 Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
 He rose, and out of slumber calling two
 That still had tended on him from his birth,
 Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
 Southward they set their faces. The birds made

Melody on branch and melody in mid air.
 The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green, ¹⁸¹
 And the live green had kindled into flowers,
 For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
 That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
 Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
 Rolling her smoke about the royal mount,
 That rose between the forest and the field.
 At times the summit of the high city flash'd;
 At times the spires and turrets half-way down ¹⁹⁰
 Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
 Only, that open'd on the field below;
 Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
 One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord;
 Here is a city of enchanter's, built
 By fairy kings.' The second echo'd him,
 'Lord, we have heard from our wise men at home
 To northward, that this king is not the King,
 But only changeling out of Fairyland, ²⁰⁰
 Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
 And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first again,
 'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
 But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
 With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
 In his own blood, his princedom, youth, and hopes,
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
 So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
 And there was no gate like it under heaven.
 For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined ²¹⁰
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
 The Lady of the Lake stood; all her dress
 Wept from her sides as water flowing away;

But like the cross her great and goodly
arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and up-
held.
And drops of water fall from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung,
from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred
fish;
And in the space to left of her, and
right, 230
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three queens,
the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a
space
Stared at the figures that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblem-
ings
Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl.
They call'd 230
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his
eyes
So long that even to him they seem'd to
move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to
whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my
sons?'

Then Gareth: 'We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to
see
The glories of our King; but these, my
men,— 240
Your city moved so weirdly in the mist—
Doubt if the King be king at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy kings and queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision; and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these
the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer, playing
on him
And saying: 'Son, I have seen the good
ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the
heavens, 250
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air;
And here is truth, but an it please thee
not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king
And fairy queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-
cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in
hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems 260
Saving the King; tho' some there be that
hold
The King a shadow, and the city real.
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou
pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou be-
come
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the
which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to
swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field. 270
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is
built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake
Anger'd: 'Old master, reverence thine own
beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and
seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath
been
To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied:
'Know ye not then the Riddling of the
Bards: 280
"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,

Elusion, and occasion, and evasion" ?
 I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
 And all that see thee, for thou art not who
 Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou
 art.

And now thou goest up to mock the King,
 Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
 Turn'd to the right, and past along the
 plain;

Whom Gareth looking after said: 'My
 men, 290

Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
 Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
 Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I.
 Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his
 twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
 And stately, rich in emblem and the work
 Of ancient kings who did their days in
 stone;

Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's
 court,

Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-
 where, 300

At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening
 peak

And pinnacle, and had made it spire to
 heaven.

And ever and anon a knight would pass
 Outward, or inward to the hall; his arms
 Clash'd, and the sound was good to Gar-
 eth's ear.

And out of bower and casement shyly
 glanced

Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of
 love;

And all about a healthful people stept
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld 311
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
 The splendor of the presence of the King
 Throned, and delivering doom — and
 look'd no more —

But felt his young heart hammering in his
 ears,

And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie
 The truthful King will doom me when I
 speak.'

Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
 Nor other, but in all the listening eyes 32
 Of those tall knights that ranged about
 the throne

Clear honor shining like the dewy star
 Of dawn, and faith in their great King,
 with pure

Affection, and the light of victory,
 And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King:
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther,
 reft

From my dead lord a field with violence;
 For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold, 33
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
 We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
 Perforce and left us neither gold nor field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold
 or field?'

To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my
 lord,

The field was pleasant in my husband's
 eye.'

And Arthur: 'Have thy pleasant field
 again,

And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
 According to the years. No boon is here,
 But justice, so thy say be proven true.

Accursed, who from the wrongs his father
 did 34

Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
 Came yet another widow crying to him:

'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King,
 am I.

With thine own hand thou slewest my dear
 lord,

A knight of Uther in the barons' war,
 When Lot and many another rose and
 fought

Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
 I held with these, and loathe to ask thee
 aught.

Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him
 dead, 35

And standeth seized of that inheritance
 Which thou that slewest the sire hast left
 the son.

So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,

Grant me some knight to do the battle for
me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my
son.'

Then strode a good knight forward, cry-
ing to him,
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the
man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and
cried,
'A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant
her none, 360
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full
hall —
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and
gag.'

But Arthur: 'We sit King, to help the
wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her
lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and
hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the
flames;
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee
dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue; but get thee
hence — 368
Lest that rough humor of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the
right,
According to the justice of the King.
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall
die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun 380
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and
knelt,
Delivering that his lord, the vassal king,
Was even upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace

Had made his goodly cousin Tristram
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all the
more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of
gold, 390
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to
rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?'
For, midway down the side of that long
hall,
A stately pile, — whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some
blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields, —
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the
hearth. 400
And under every shield a knight was
named.
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall:
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare, without a
sign
Saving the name beneath. And Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and
bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur
cried 409
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of his
crown
Than make him knight because men call
him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd
their hands
From war among themselves, but left them
kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them
we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of
king,

As Mark would sully the low state of churl;
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
 Return, and meet, and hold him from our
 eyes,⁴²¹
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of
 lead,
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man of
 plots,
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambush-
 ings—
 No fault of thine; let Kay the seneschal
 Look to thy wants, and send thee satis-
 fied—
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be
 seen!’

And many another suppliant crying came
 With noise of ravage wrought by beast and
 man,⁴²²
 And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
 Down on the shoulders of the twain, his
 men,
 Approach’d between them toward the King,
 and ask’d,
 ‘A boon, Sir King,’—his voice was all
 ashamed,—
 ‘For see ye not how weak and hunger-
 worn
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me to
 serve
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-
 knives
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my
 name.
 Hereafter I will fight.’

To him the King:
 ‘A goodly youth and worth a goodlier
 boon!⁴⁴⁰
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must
 Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks, be
 thine.’

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of
 mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
 Root-bitten by white lichen:

‘Lo ye now!
 This fellow hath broken from some abbey,
 where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,

However that might chance! but an he
 work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,⁴⁴¹
 And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.’

Then Lancelot standing near: ‘Sir Sen-
 chal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and
 all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not
 know.
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and
 fine,
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and
 hands
 Large, fair, and fine!—Some young lad’s
 mystery—
 But, or from sheepcot or king’s hall, the
 boy
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
 Lest he should come to shame thy judging
 of him.’

Then Kay: ‘What murmurest thou of
 mystery?⁴⁴²
 Think ye this fellow will poison the King’s
 dish?
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like—mystery!
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask’d
 For horse and armor. Fair and fine, for-
 sooth!
 Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou
 to it
 That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some
 fine day
 Undo thee not—and leave my man to
 me.’

So Gareth all for glory underwent
 The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,
 Ate with young lads his portion by the
 door,⁴⁴³
 And couch’d at night with grimy kitchen-
 knives.
 And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
 But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
 Would hustle and harry him, and labor
 him
 Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
 To turn the broach, draw water, or hew
 wood,
 Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow’d him-
 self
 With all obedience to the King, and
 wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease
 That graced the lowliest act in doing it. 480
 And when the thralls had talk among
 themselves,
 And one would praise the love that linkt
 the King
 And Lancelot — how the King had saved
 his life
 In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
 King's —

For Lancelot was first in the tournament,
 But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field —
 Gareth was glad. Or if some other told
 How once the wandering forester at dawn,
 Far over the blue tarns and bazy seas, 489
 On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
 A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
 'He passes to the Isle Avilion,
 He passes and is heal'd and cannot die' —
 Gareth was glad. But if their talk were
 foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
 Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
 That first they mock'd, but, after, rever-
 enced him.

Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale
 Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling
 way 499

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
 All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
 Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
 Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would
 come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
 Among dead leaves, and drive them all
 apart.

Or when the thralls had sport among them-
 selves,

So there were any trial of mastery,
 He, by two yards in casting bar or stone,
 Was counted best; and if there chanced a
 joust, 509

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
 Would hurry thither, and when he saw the
 knights

Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
 And the spear spring, and good horse reel,
 the boy
 Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the
 thralls;
 But in the weeks that follow'd, the good
 Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him
 swear,
 And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
 Between the in-crescent and de-crescent
 moon,
 Arms for her son, and loosed him from his
 vow. 520

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of
 Lot

With whom he used to play at tourney
 once,

When both were children, and in lonely
 haunts

Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
 And each at either dash from either end —
 Shame never made girl redder than Gareth
 joy.

He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the smoke,
 at once

I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee —
 These news be mine, none other's — nay,
 the King's —

Descend into the city; whereon he sought
 The King alone, and found, and told him
 all. 531

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in
 a tilt

For pastime; yea, he said it; joust can I.
 Make me thy knight — in secret! let my
 name

Be hidden, and give me the first quest, I
 spring

Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
 Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush,
 and bow

Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:
 'Son, the good mother let me know thee
 here,

And sent her wish that I would yield thee
 thine. 540

Make thee my knight? my knights are
 sworn to vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
 And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
 And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his
 knees:

'My King, for hardihood I can promise
 thee.

For uttermost obedience make demand

Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks !
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King:
'Make thee my knight in secret ? yea, but
he, 552
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must
know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot
know,
Thy noblest and thy truest !'

And the King:
'But wherefore would ye men should wonder
at you ?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the
deed, 559
Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd:
'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it ?
Let be my name until I make my name !
My deeds will speak ; it is but for a day.'
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-
ingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:
'I have given him the first quest ; he is not
proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this in
hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far
away. 570
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor
slain.'

Then that same day there past into the
hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes, and lightly was her slender
nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.
She into hall past with her page and cried:

'O King, for thou hast driven the foe
without, 579
See to the foe within ! bridge, ford, beset

By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit ye
there ?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,

Till even the lonest hold were all as free
From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor
mine

Rest ; so my knighthood keep the vow
they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall
be

Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall. 58
What is thy name ? thy need ?'

'My name ?' she said—
'Lynette, my name ; noble ; my need, a
knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonore,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than my-
self.

She lives in Castle Perilous. A river
Runs in three loops about her living-place ;
And o'er it are three passings, and three
knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth.
And of that four the mightiest, holds her
stay'd 600

In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with
him ;

And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him thy chief man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory ; but she will not
wed

Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask'd: 609

'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the realm. But say, these
four,

Who be they ? What the fashion of the
men ?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they
will ;

Courteous or bestial from the moment,
 such
 As have nor law nor king; and three of
 these
 Proud in their fantasy call themselves the
 Day,
 Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-
 Star,
 Being strong fools; and never a whit more
 wise 620
 The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in
 black,
 A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
 He names himself the Night and oftener
 Death,
 And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
 And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
 To show that who may slay or scape the
 three,
 Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
 And all these four be fools, but mighty
 men,
 And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he
 rose, 630
 A head with kindling eyes above the
 throng,
 'A boon, Sir King — this quest!' then —
 for he mark'd
 Kay near him groaning like a wounded
 bull —
 'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
 knave am I,
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
 am I,
 And I can topple over a hundred such.
 Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing
 at him,
 Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough,
 sudden,
 And pardonable, worthy to be knight — 639
 Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,
 pride, wrath
 Slew the may-white. She lifted either
 arm,
 'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief
 knight,
 And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
 knave.'
 Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
 turn'd,

Fled down the lane of access to the King,
 Took horse, descended the slope street, and
 past
 The weird white gate, and paused without,
 beside
 The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-
 knave!'

Now two great entries open'd from the
 hall, 650
 At one end one that gave upon a range
 Of level pavement where the King would
 pace
 At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
 And down from this a lordly stairway
 sloped
 Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
 towers;
 And out by this main doorway past the
 King.
 But one was counter to the hearth, and
 rose
 High that the highest-crested helm could
 ride
 Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry
 fled
 The damsel in her wrath, and on to this 660
 Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
 King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a
 town,
 A war-horse of the best, and near it stood
 The two that out of north had follow'd
 him.
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that
 held
 The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth
 loosed
 A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to
 heel,
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
 And from it, like a fuel-smother'd fire
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and
 flash'd as those 670
 Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there
 burns
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the
 shield
 And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of
 grain
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and
 tip

With trenchant steel, around him slowly
 preat
 The people, while from out of kitchen
 came
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who had
 work'd 680
 Lustier than any, and whom they could but
 love,
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and
 cried,
 'God bless the King, and all his fellow-
 ship !'
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
 Down the slope street, and past without the
 gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his
 cause
 Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
 named, 688
 His owner, but remembers all, and growls
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
 To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
 With horse and arms — the King hath past
 his time —
 My scullion knave ! Thralls, to your work
 again,
 For an your fire be low ye kindle mine !
 Will there be dawn in West and eve in
 East ?
 Begone ! — my knave ! — belike and like
 enow
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his
 youth
 So shook his wits they wander in his
 prime —
 Crazy ! How the villain lifted up his
 voice, 700
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-
 knave !
 Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
 Well — I will after my loud knave, and
 learn
 Whether he know me for his master yet.
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my
 lance
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the
 mire —
 Thence, if the King awoken from his craze,
 Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said:
 'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the
 King, 710
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,
 But ever meekly served the King in thee ?
 Abide; take counsel, for this lad is great
 And lusty, and knowing both of lance and
 sword.'
 'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are over-
 fine
 To mar stout knaves with foolish cour-
 sies;'
 Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
 Down the slope city, and out beyond the
 gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
 Mutter'd the damsel: 'Wherefore did the
 King 720
 Scorn me ? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at
 least
 He might have yielded to me one of those
 Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
 Rather than — O sweet heaven ! O, be
 upon him ! —
 His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew —
 And there were none but few goodlier
 than he —
 Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is
 mine.
 Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one
 That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
 bolt,
 And deems it carrion of some woodland
 thing, 730
 Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender nose
 With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,
 'Hence !
 Avoid, thou smell'st all of kitchen-grease.
 And jook who comes behind; for there
 was Kay.
 'Knowest thou not me ? thy master ? I
 am Kay.
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
 'Master no more ! too well I know thee,
 ay —
 The most ungente knight in Arthur's hall.'
 'Have at thee then,' said Kay; they shock'd,
 and Kay 735
 Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
 'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good
horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the
beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke:

'What doest thou, scullion, in my fellow-
ship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the
more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master
— thou! —
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! — to
me
Thou smallest all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently,
'say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he
talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the man-
ner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,
knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt 76:
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd
again
Down the long avenues of a boundless
wood;
And Gareth following was again beknaved:

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the
only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the
wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as
leaves. 769
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but
yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of
thine?
Fight, an thou canst; I have miss'd the only
way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted,
saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand
pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof a
mere,
Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and
shouts 780
Ascended, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and
crying,
'They have bound my lord to cast him in
the mere.'
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the
wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with
thee.'
And when the damsel spake contemptu-
ously,
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the
pines
He plunged; and there, black-shadow'd
nigh the mere, 789
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but
three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the
stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free
feet
Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.
'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff
rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause
is theirs 800
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin
here
Drown him, and with a stone about his
neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have
saved a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.

And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye ?'

Gareth sharply spake:
'None ! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,

In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage ?'

Whereat the baron saying, 'I well believe

Yon be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh
Broke from Lynette: 'Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave ! —

But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters. 820
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay — for thou smell'st of the kitchen still.

But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,

All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers, where that day a feast had been

Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride

Before the damsel, and the baron set 830
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —

The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,

"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I, 840
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to him —

Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
'Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord

Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board, 850
Sat down beside him, ate and then began:

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave,
or not,

Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King.
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not; but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And savor of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with,

Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel weigh
back 860

To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The savor of my life.'

And Gareth said,
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved

Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way

And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,

'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she replied:

'I fly no more; I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, me thinks 870

Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool ?

For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee; then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:

'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find

880

My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops

Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.

Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep;
the stream

Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side

Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold

In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,

Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.

89

And therefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Ar-
thur's hall,

For whom we let thee pass?' 'Nay, nay,'
she said,

'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter
scorn

Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee
here

His kitchen-knave; and look thou to thy-
self.

See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight
but knave.'

900

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the
Dawn,

And servants of the Morning-Star, ap-
proach,

Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair
girls

In gilt and rosy raiment came. Their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair

All over glanced with dewdrop or with
gem

Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.

These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a
shield

909

Blue also, and thereon the morning star.

And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was
brought,

Glorying; and in the stream beneath him
shone,

Immingled with heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him: 'Wherefore
stare ye so?

Thou shakest in thy fear. There yet is
time;

Flee down the valley before he get to horse.

Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight
but knave.'

920

Said Gareth: 'Damsel, whether knave or
knight,

Far liefer had I fight a score of times

Than hear thee so missay me and revile.

Fair words were best for him who fights
for thee;

But truly foul are better, for they send

That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I
know

That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore

The star, when mounted, cried from o'er
the bridge:

'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of
me!

Such fight not I, but answer scorn with
scorn.

930

For this were shame to do him further
wrong

Than set him on his feet, and take his
horse

And arms, and so return him to the King.

Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
knave.

Avoid; for it beseemeth not a knave

To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest!

I spring from loftier lineage than thine
own.'

He spake; and all at fiery speed the two

Shook'd on the central bridge, and either
spear

Bent but not brake, and either knight at
once,

940

Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult

Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,

Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,

And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his
brand

He drave his enemy backward down the
bridge,
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!'
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one
stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the
ground.

Then cried the fallen, 'Take not my life;
I yield.'

And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace.' ⁹⁵¹
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion! I of
thee?

I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!'
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there
unlaced

His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy
charge

Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou
crave ⁹⁶¹

His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, dam-
sel, thou,
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled;
Then when he came upon her, spake:
'Methought,

Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the
bridge,

The savor of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier; but the wind hath
changed,

I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,
"O morning star" — not that tall felon
there ⁹⁷¹

Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown, —

"O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on
me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and
away,
For hard by here is one that guards a
ford —

The second brother in their fool's para-
ble —

Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame; thou art not knight
but knave.' ⁹⁸¹

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-
ingly:

'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the
rest,

Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-
mates

Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his
coat,

"Guard it," and there was none to meddle
with it.

And such a coat art thou, and thee the
King

Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee — and — knight
or knave — ⁹⁹⁰

The knave that doth thee service as full
knight

Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!

Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a
knight,

Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me the
more,

That, being but knave, I throw thine ene-
mies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet
thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-
loop, ⁹⁹⁹

Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday
Sun

Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower
That blows a globe of after arrowlets

Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the
fierce shield,

All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watch-
ing him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches
here?'

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
 'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall ¹⁰¹⁰
 Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.'
 'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and, vizoring up a red
 And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
 Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
 Whom Gareth met mid-stream; no room was there
 For lance or tourney-skill. Four strokes they struck
 With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
 Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
 Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
 The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream ¹⁰²⁰
 Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
 So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
 As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
 Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the King.
 'Myself when I return will plead for thee.
 Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.
 'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?'
 'Nay, not a point; nor art thou victor here. ¹⁰²⁹
 There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
 His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I saw it.

"O sun" — not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
 Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness —

"O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
 O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
 Shine sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of love-song or of love?
 Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
 Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance, —

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
 O dewy flowers that close when day is done, ¹⁰⁴¹
 Blow sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
 To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
 Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
 A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
 The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
 Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

"O birds that warble to the morning sky, ¹⁰⁴⁹
 O birds that warble as the day goes by,
 Sing sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,
 Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
 May-music growing with the growing light,
 Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare —
 So runs thy fancy — these be for the spit,
 Larding and basting. See thou have not now
 Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
 There stands the third fool of their allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow, ¹⁰⁶⁰
 All in a rose-red from the west, and all
 Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
 Deep - dimpled current underneath, the knight
 That named himself the Star of Evening stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the mad-man there
 Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she cried,
 'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
 That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
 His armor off him, these will turn the blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the
bridge,
‘O brother-star, why shine ye here so low ?
Thy ward is higher up; but have ye slain
The damsel's champion ?’ and the damsel
cried:

‘No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's
heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee !
For both thy younger brethren have gone
down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir
Star.
Art thou not old ?’

‘Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty
boys.’
Said Gareth, ‘Old, and over-bold in brag !
But that same strength which threw the
Morning Star
Can throw the Evening.’

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
‘Approach and arm me!’ With slow
steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a
helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the star of
even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem,
shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him
again,
But up like fire he started; and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his
knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great
heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
‘Thou hast made us lords, and canst not
put us down !’

He half despair's; so Gareth seem'd to
strike
Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,
‘Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O
good knight-knave —
O knave, as noble as any of all the
knights —
Shame me not, shame me not. I have
prophesied —
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
Round —
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd
skin —
Strike — strike — the wind will never
change again.’
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor off
him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd
skin,
And could not wholly bring him under,
more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on
ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and
springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the
hilt.
‘I have thee now;’ but forth that other
sprang,
And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry
arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining even his utter-
most
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the
bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
‘Lead, and I follow.’

But the damsel said:
‘I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-
knaves.

“O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy
plain,
O rainbow with three colors after rain,
Shine sweetly; thrice my love hath smiled on
me.”

‘Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added
— Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —

Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
 Missaid thee. Noble I am, and thought the
 King
 Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon,
 friend,
 For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
 And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
 As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
 Hast maz'd my wit. I marvel what thou
 art.' 1141

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to
 blame,
 Saving that you mistrusted our good King
 Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking,
 one
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said your
 say;
 Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth !
 I hold
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor
 meet
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish beat
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness. 1150
 Shamed ? care not ! thy foul sayings fought
 for me;
 And seeing now thy words are fair, me-
 thinks
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his
 great self,
 Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
 When the lone henn forgets his melan-
 choly,
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching
 dreams
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at
 him,
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
 Where bread and baken meats and good
 red wine 1160
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
 Had sent her coming champion, waited
 him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on
 horse
 Sculptured, and deekt in slowly-waning
 hues.
 'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was
 here,

Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the
 rock
 The war of Time against the soul of man.
 And you four fools have suck'd their alle-
 gory
 From these damp walls, and taken but the
 form. 1170
 Know ye not these ?' and Gareth lookt
 and read —
 In letters like to those the vexillary
 Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming
 Gelt —
 'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES,' — 'HES-
 PERUS,' —
 'NOX' — 'MORS,' beneath five figures,
 armed men,
 Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
 And running down the Soul, a shape that
 fled
 With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose
 hair,
 For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
 'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
 Who comes behind ?'

For one — delay'd at first
 Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay 1180
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter
 chanced,
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the
 wood —
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
 loops —
 His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly drew
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,
 cried,
 'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my
 friend.'
 And Gareth crying prick'd against the
 cry; 1190
 But when they closed — in a moment — at
 one touch
 Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the
 world —
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
 That when he found the grass within his
 hands
 He laugh'd. The laughter jarr'd upon Ly-
 nette.
 Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and over-
 thrown,
 And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
 Why laugh ye ? that ye blew your boast in
 vain ?'

'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-
cent,

1200

And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by
whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —
Device and sorcery and unhappiness —
Out, sword; we are thrown !' And Lance-
lot answer'd: 'Prince,

O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth: 'Thou — Lancelot ! —
thine the hand

1210

That threw me ? An some chance to mar
the boast

Thy brethren of thee make — which could
not chance —

Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lance-
lot — thou !'

Whereat the maiden, petulant: 'Lance-
lot,

Why came ye not, when call'd ? and where-
fore now

Come ye, not call'd ? I gloried in my
knave,

Who being still rebuked would answer still
Courteous as any knight — but now, if
knight,

The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and
trick'd,

1220

And only wondering wherefore play'd
upon;

And doubtful whether I and mine be
scorn'd.

Where should be truth if not in Arthur's
hall,

In Arthur's presence ? Knight, knave,
prince and fool,

I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said:

'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth ! knight art
thou

To the King's best wish. O damsel, be
you wise,

To call him shamed who is but over-
thrown ?

Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a
time.

1229

Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven, and thy
good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of
thine.

Well hast thou done; for all the stream is
freed,

And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his
foes,

And when reviled hast answer'd graciously.
And makest merry when overthrown.

Prince, knight,
Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table
Round !'

And then when turning to Lynette he
told

1230

The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said:
'Ay, well — ay, well — for worse than be-
ing fool'd

Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and
drinks

And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.

Seek, till we find.' And when they sought
and found,

Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed:

'Sound sleep be thine ! sound came to
sleep hast thou.

1239

Wake lusty ! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother ? Ay, but such a one

As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep —

Good lord, how sweetly smells the honey-
suckle

In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness !

O Lancelot, Lancelot,' — and she clapt her
hands —

'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn

1240

have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with
him.

Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor ? so will my knight-
knave

Miss the full flower of this accomplish-
ment.'

Said Lancelot: 'Peradventure he you
name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he
will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger,
fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,' she
said, ¹²⁷⁰
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd
the shield:
'Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom
all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your
lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for
you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will
not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence; let us go.'

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho' sum-
mer-wan, ¹²⁸¹
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe
falls!'
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor pealing
there!'
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him,
crying:
'Yield, yield him this again; 't is he must
fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lance-
lot now ¹²⁹⁰
To lend thee horse and shield. Wonders ye
have done,
Miracles ye cannot. Here is glory enow
In having flung the three. I see thee
maim'd,
Mangled; I swear thou canst not fling the
fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye
know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or
voice,

Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, prince,' she cried,
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day, ¹³⁰⁰
But watch'd him have I like a phantom
pass
Chilling the night; nor have I heard the
voice.

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported
him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the soft
babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant
flesh,
Monster! O prince, I went for Lancelot
first,
The quest is Lancelot's; give him back the
shield.' ¹³¹⁰

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for
this,
Belike he wins it as the better man;
Thus — and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than him-
self;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword,
and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might
fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his
words.

Then Gareth: 'Here be rules. I know
but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to win. ¹³²⁰
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee!'
sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that
grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they
rode
In converse till she made her palfrey
halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,
'There.'

And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak ¹³²⁹
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black
horn

Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the
horn.

Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he
blew;

Whereon were hollow tramlings up and
down

And muffled voices heard, and shadows
past;

Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood, ¹³⁴⁰
Beautiful among lights, and waving to
him.

White hands and courtesey. But when the
prince

Three times had blown — after long hush
— at last —

The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which
housed therein.

High on a night-black horse, in night-black
arms,

With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of
Death,

And crown'd with fleshless laughter —
some ten steps —

In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn —
advanced

The monster, and then paused, and spake
no word. ¹³⁵⁰

But Gareth spake and all indignantly:
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength
of ten,

Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God
hath given,

But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries

Of that which Life hath done with, and the
clod,

Less dull than thou, will hide with man-
tling flowers

As if for pity?' But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher. A maiden
swoon'd;

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and
wept, ¹³⁶⁰

As doom'd to be the bride of Night and
Death;

Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his
helm;

And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warn
blood felt

Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were
aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely
neigh'd,

And Death's dark war-horse bounded for-
ward with him.

Then those that did not blink the terror
saw

That Death was cast to ground, and slowly
rose.

But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the
skull. ¹³⁶⁰

Half fell to right and half to left and
lay.

Then with a stronger buffet he clove the
helm

As throughly as the skull; and out from
this

Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,
'Knight,

Slay me not; my three brethren bade me
do it,

To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.

They never dream'd the passes would be
past.'

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair
child, ¹³⁷⁰

What madness made thee challenge the
chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bade
me do it.

They hate the King and Lancelot, the
King's friend;

They hoped to slay him somewhere on the
stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be
past.'

Then sprang the happier day from under-
ground;

And Lady Lyonors and her bouse, with
dance

And revel and song, made merry over
Death,

As being after all their foolish fears ¹³⁸⁰

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the
quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette.

NOTE. The complete series of the Idylls, including *The Coming of Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur*, comprises twelve poems. In this volume six of the series are omitted, the first omission being of four Idylls following *Gareth and Lynette* in the completed work. These omitted Idylls are by name (1) *The Marriage of Geraint*, (2) *Geraint and Enid*, (3) *Balin and Balan*, (4) *Merlin and Vivien*. The second omission follows the Idyll of *The Holy Grail*, the omitted Idylls being *Pelleas and Ettarre* and *The Last Tournament*.

The unity of the *Idylls of the King*, taken as a whole, is not so strictly maintained that a reading of the omitted Idylls is essential to an understanding of the story. It is true that we can find in a study of the whole series of the Idylls a progressive degeneration within Arthur's court, and that a careful treatment of the Idylls with a special effort to emphasize this element in the unity of the whole series can bring forth in each Idyll some character or incident that betrays the growing degeneration, but the true unity lies, not in the story of this degeneration, but in the character of Arthur. The reader can get the essential elements of the Idylls by a study of those separate poems included in this volume in which the influence of Arthur is predominant.

In connection with this question of the unity of the Idylls as a whole, the date of composition of the separate poems is noteworthy. The *Morte d'Arthur*, later incorporated into *The Passing of Arthur*, was written about 1835 and published in the 1842 volume. In 1859, seventeen years later, appeared the first instalment of the Idylls, including the following titles: *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. After a lapse of ten years, in 1869 four new poems were added to those already published, namely, *The Coming of Arthur*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur* (including as mentioned before the *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842). After another lapse, this time of three years, *The Last Tournament* and *Gareth and Lynette* appeared. And last of all, in 1885, *Balin and Balan* was included, appearing in a volume entitled *Tirienas and Other Poems*. This resumé of the dates of publication of the separate poems in the series is introduced here to show that the unity of the whole is dependent not upon a clearly defined plot worked out progressively from Idyll to Idyll, but upon the character, influence, ideals, and personality of Arthur.

Furthermore, those Idylls in which the influ-

ence of Arthur, whether he is represented throughout as being present in person or not, is clearly predominant, are the Idylls which contain the finest poetry of the whole series. No one will seriously assert that the *Enid* Idylls, or *Balin and Balan*, or *Pelleas and Ettarre* are, in plot or expression, the equals of *Gareth and Lynette*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, or the exquisitely pathetic *Guinevere*. In restricting the Idylls in this volume to those in which the influence of Arthur is predominant, we have therefore not only retained the material that is necessary for a conception of the truest unity of the series as a whole, but we have chosen also the finest of the separate Idylls for the reader.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Before — or after — reading *Lancelot and Elaine*, the student should for comparison read *The Lady of Shalott* (p. 617 in this volume). *The Lady of Shalott*, which was published in 1832, is one of the earliest instances of Tennyson's interest in the Arthur legends and is founded on the same story which is the subject of *Lancelot and Elaine*.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the
east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's
earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the
gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilage fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tint, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower, 11
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father,
climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her
door,
Strip'd off the case, and read the naked
shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it, 19
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is
fresh,
That ten years back; this dealt him at
Caerlyle,

That at Caerleon — this at Camelot —
 And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was
 there !
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd,
 but God
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy
 down,
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good
 shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his
 name ?
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt 30
 For the great diamond in the diamond
 jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that
 name
 Had named them, since a diamond was the
 prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd
 him king,
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black
 tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain
 side;
 For here two brothers, one a king, had
 met
 And fought together, but their names were
 lost; 40
 And each had slain his brother at a blow;
 And down they fell and made the glen ab-
 horr'd.
 And there they lay till all their bones were
 bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into color with the crags.
 And he that once was king had on a crown
 Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
 And Arthur came, and laboring up the
 pass,
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and
 the skull
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull 50
 the crown
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn.
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged,
 and caught,
 And set it on his head, and in his heart
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt
 be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had the
 gem
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them
 to his knights
 Saying: 'These jewels, whereupon I
 chanced
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
 King's — 59
 For public use. Henceforward let there be,
 Once every year, a joust for one of these;
 For so by nine years' proof we needs must
 learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall
 grow
 In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the
 land
 Hereafter, which God hinder !' Thus he
 spoke.
 And eight years past, eight jousts had been,
 and still
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the
 year,
 With purpose to present them to the Queen
 When all were won; but, meaning all at
 once 70
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken
 word.

Now for the central diamond and the
 last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
 Hard on the river nigh the place which
 now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
 Spake — for she had been sick — to Guine-
 vere:
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot
 move
 To these fair jousts ?' 'Yea, lord,' she
 said, 'ye know it.' 80
 'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the
 great deeds
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the
 Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the
 King.
 He, thinking that he read her meaning
 there,
 'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a heart

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
However much he yearn'd to make com-
plete

The tale of diamonds for his destined
boon —

Urged him to speak against the truth, and
say,

'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly
whole,

And lets me from the saddle;' and the
King

Glanced first at him, then her, and went his
way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much
to blame!

Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the
knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the
crowd

Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones,
who take

Their pastime now the trustful King is
gone!"

Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain:
'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer when ye loved me
first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of
grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Then surely can I silence with all ease.

But now my loyal worship is allow'd

Of all men; many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,

Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty; and our knights at
feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the
King

Would listen smiling. How then? is there
more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would your-
self,

Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh:

'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless
King,

That passionate perfection, my good lord —
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?

He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me. Only here to-day
There gleamed a vague suspicion in his
eyes;

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with
him — else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,

To make them like himself; but, friend, to
me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all.
For who loves me must have a touch of
earth;

The low sun makes the color. I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the
bond.

And therefore hear my words: go to the
jousts;

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our
dream

When sweetest; and the vermin voices
here

May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but
they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of
knights:

'And with what face, after my pretext
made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own word
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,

'A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me; but listen to me,

If I must find you wit. We hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a
touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot; your great
name,

This conquers. Hide it therefore; go un-
known.

Win! by this kiss you will; and our true
King

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,

Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he
seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than him-
self;

They prove to him his work. Win and re-
turn.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be
known, 159

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer
foot,

And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the tow-
ers.

Thither he made, and blew the gateway
horn.

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled
man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd. 170
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless
man;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir
Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house
There was not. Some light jest among
them rose

With laughter dying down as the great
knight

Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:
'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by
what name 180

Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of
those,

After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen; the rest, his Table
Round,

Known as they are, to me they are un-
known.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of
knights:

'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and
known,
What I by mere mischance have brought,
my shield.

But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the
shield — 191

I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not
mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat: 'Here is
Torre's:

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir
Torre,

'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it'
Here laugh'd the father saying: 'Fie, Sir
Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight? 200
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lusthood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an
hour,

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me
not

Before this noble knight,' said young La-
vaine,

'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on
Torre,

He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go;
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden
dreamt 210

That some one put this diamond in her
hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That if I went and if I fought and won
it —

But all was jest and joke among our-
selves —

Then must she keep it safer. All was
jest.

But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight.
Win shall I not, but do my best to win; 220
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,

Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost my-
self,

Then were I glad of you as guide and
friend;

And you shall win this diamond,—as I
hear,

It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'
'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir
Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple
maids.' ²³⁰

Then she, who held her eyes upon the
ground,

Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparage-
ment

Before the stranger knight, who, looking at
her,

Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:

'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,

Rash were my judgment then, who deem
this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like.' ²⁴⁰

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid
Elaine,

Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.

The great and guilty love he bare the
Queen,

In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his
time.

Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,

Had been the sleeker for it; but in him ²⁴⁹
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose

And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.

Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest
man

That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.

However marr'd, of more than twice her
years,

Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the
cheek,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her
eyes

And loved him, with that love which was
her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the
court, ²⁶⁰

Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half dis-
dain

Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind;

Whom they with meats and vintage of their
best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.

And much they ask'd of court and Table
Round,

And ever well and readily answer'd he;
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guine-
vere,

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man, ²⁷⁰
Heard from the baron that, ten years be-
fore,

The heathen caught and reft him of his
tongue.

'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce
design

Against my house, and him they caught
and maim'd;

But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the
woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur
broke

The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O, there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine
said, rapt ²⁸⁰

By all the sweet and sudden passion of
youth

Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have
fought.

O, tell us — for we live apart — you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot
spoke

And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day
long

Rang by the white mouth of the violent
Glem;

And in the four loud battles by the shore
Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the war

That thunder'd in and out the gloomy
skirts ²⁹⁰

Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious
King

Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald centred in a sun

Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,

When the strong neighings of the wild
White Horse

Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,

And down the waste sand-shores of Trath
Teroit, ³⁰⁰

Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the
mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after,
stand

High on a heap of slain, from spar to
plume

Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
"They are broken, they are broken!" for
the King, 300

However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight casts him down, he
laughs,

Saying his knights are better men than
he —

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him. I never saw his like; there lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and when
he fell 318

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living
smile

Died from his lips, across him came a
cloud

Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him
cheer,

There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature; and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for
her.

And all night long his face before her
lived,

As when a painter, poring on a face, 330
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her
sleep,

Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the
thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet
Lavaine.

First as in fear, step after step, she stole

Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating. 340
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the
court,

'This shield, my friend, where is it?' and
Lavaine

Past inward, as she came from out the
tower.

There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd,
and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she
drew

Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more
amazed

Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light. 350

He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.

Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.

She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
'Fair lord, whose name I know not —
noble it is,

I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said
he, 360

'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.

Such is my wont, as those who know me
know.'

'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing
mine

Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you.'

And he turn'd

Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd: 'True,
my child.

Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to me.
What is it?' and she told him, 'A red
sleeve 370

Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it.
Then he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, 'I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living,' and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
delight;

But left her all the paler when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblanch'd
shield,

His brother's, which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:

'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'³⁸⁰
She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your squire!'
Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice. Now get you hence to bed;'
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away. She staid a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —
Her bright hair blown about the serious face³⁹⁰
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight³⁹⁹
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,
And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
And cells and chambers. All were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.⁴¹⁰

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,

They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away.
Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
And after muttering, 'The great Lancelot,'
At last he got his breath and answer'd:
'One,'⁴²⁰
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there — then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat⁴³⁰
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,⁴³⁹
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work;
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said:
'Me you call great; mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance; but there is many a youth

Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great.
There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped
upon him 450

As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either
side,

They that assail'd, and they that held the
lists,

Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
move,

Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock that a man far-off might well per-
ceive,

If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder
of arms.

And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd
into it 460

Against the stronger. Little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron — whom he smote, he over-
threw.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and
kin,

Ranged with the Table Round that held
the lists,

Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger
knight

Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other,
'Lo!

What is he? I do not mean the force
alone —

The grace and versatility of the man! 470
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lancelot
worn

Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we that know him
know.'

'How then? who then?' a fury seized
them all,

A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their
steeds, and thus,

Their plumes driven backward by the wind
they made

In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North
Sea, 480

Green-glimmering toward the summit,
bears, with all

Its stormy crests that smoke against the
skies,

Down on a bark, and overbears the bark
And him that helms it; so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a
spear

Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the
head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt and
remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worship-
fully.

He bore a knight of old repute to the
earth, 490

And brought his horse to Lancelot where
he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony,
got,

But thought to do while he might yet en-
dure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with, — drave his kith
and kin,

And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets
blew

Proclaiming his the prize who wore the
sleeve

Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the
knights, 500

His party, cried, 'Advance and take thy
prize

The diamond;' but he answer'd: 'Diamond
me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me
not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from
the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and
sat,

Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-
head.'

'Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said La-
vaine, 510

'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
But he, 'I die already with it; draw —

Draw,' — and Lavaine drew, and Sir
Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly
groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down
he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him
in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in
daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wild world's rumor by the
grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling show-
ers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the
lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and
West,
Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate
isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying
to him,
'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won
the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his
prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'
'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such
an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day —
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore
rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
knight.
Wounded and wearied, needs must he be
near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not
one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given;
His prowess was too wondrous. We will
do him
No customary honor; since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,

And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye
find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took
And gave the diamond. Then from where
he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a
prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and
strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
And Gareth, a good knight, but there-
withal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally
forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him
leave
The banquet and concourse of knights and
kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Fast, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who hath
come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridden away to die?' So fear'd the
King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, re-
turn'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing
ask'd,
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,'
she said.
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen
amazed,
'Was he not with you? won he not your
prize?'
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that like
was he.'
And when the King demanded how she
knew,
Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted from
us
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a
touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great
name

Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide
his name
From all men, even the King, and to this
end
Had made the pretext of a hindering
wound,⁵⁸⁰
That he might joust unknown of all, and
learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he
learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:
'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted
thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True,
indeed,⁵⁹⁰
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter; now
remains
But little cause for laughter. His own
kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,
this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon
him;
So that he went sore wounded from the
field.
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are
mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great
pearls,⁶⁰¹
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,
'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she
choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her
face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung her-
self
Down on the great King's couch, and
writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the
palm,
And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the unhear-
ing wall,

Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose
again,
And moved about her palace, proud and
pale.⁶¹⁰

Gawain the while thro' all the region
round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the
quest,
Touch'd at all points except the poplar
grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the
maid
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from
Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?'
'He won.'
'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from
the jousts
Hurt in the side;' whereat she caught her
breath.
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance
go.⁶²⁰
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she
swoon'd.
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,
came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the
prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not
find
The victor, but had ridden a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the
search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat: 'Bide with
us,
And ride no more at random, noble prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a
shield;⁶³⁰
This will he send or come for. Further-
more
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear.' To this the courte-
ous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And staid; and cast his eyes on fair
Elaine;
Where could be found face daintier? then
her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect—
again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd.

'Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!' ⁶⁴⁰

And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a
height

Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and low smiles, and golden elo-
quence

And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him: 'Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why
slight your King,' ⁶⁵⁰

And lose the quest he sent you on, and
prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the henn we slipt her at, and
went

To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,'
said he,

'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the shield.'
And when the shield was brought, and Ga-
wain saw

Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with
gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and
mock'd: ⁶⁶⁰

'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that
true man!'

'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily,
⁶⁷⁰

Who dream'd my knight the greatest
knight of all.'

'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you
love

This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye
know it!

Speak therefore; shall I waste myself in
vain?'

Full simple was her answer: 'What know
I?'

My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of
love,

Wish'd it had been my mother, for they
talk'd, ⁶⁷⁰

Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so my-
self —

I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love.'

'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love
him well,

But would not, knew ye what all others
know,

And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried
Elaine,

And lifted her fair face and moved away;
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your
sleeve. ⁶⁸⁰

Would he break faith with one I may not
name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at
last?

Nay — like enow. Why then, far be it
from me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full
well

Where your great knight is hidden, let me
leave

My quest with you; the diamond also —
here!

For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love
or not, ⁶⁹⁰

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times! — a thousand times
farewell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter! there, I
think,

So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he
gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he
went

A true-love ballad, lightly rode away. ⁷⁰⁰

Thence to the court he past; there told
the King

What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is the
knight.'

And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I
learnt,

But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region; but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore. She loves him;
and to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,

I gave the diamond. She will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-
place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and
replied, 710
'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in
awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a
word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd
abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues
were loosed:

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.' 721
Some read the King's face, some the
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but
most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old
dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with the
sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd
so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-
quillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder
flared; 730

Till even the knights at banquet twice or
thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who
sat

With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet un-
seen

Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats be-
came

As wormwood and she hated all who
pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat, 740
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept

The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and
said:

'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and
now,

Sweet father, will you let me lose my
wits?'

'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let
me hence,'

She answer'd, 'and find out our dear La-
vaine.'

'Ye will not lose your wits for dear La-
vaine. 750

Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear
anon

Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,
'And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond
to him,

Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud prince who left the quest to
me.

Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's
aid. 760

The gentler-born the maiden, the more
bound,

My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens. Let
me hence,

I pray you.' Then her father nodding
said:

'Ay, ay, the diamond. Wit ye well, my
child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight were
whole,

Being our greatest. Yea, and you must
give it—

And sure I think this fruit is hung too
high

For any mouth to gape for save a
queen's— 770

Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you
gone,

Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slept away,
And while she made her ready for her ride
Her father's latest word humm'd in her
ear,

'Being so very wilful you must go,'
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
'Being so very wilful you must die.'
But she was happy enough and shook it
off, 779

As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
'What matter, so I help him back to life?'
Then far away with good Sir Torre for
guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless
downs

To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers;
Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried,
'Lavaine,

How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He
amazed, 790
'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!

How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?'
But when the maid had told him all her
tale,

Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his
moods

Left them, and under the strange-statued
gate,

Where Arthur's wars were render'd mysti-
cally,

Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Came-
lot;

And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves. There first she saw the
casque 800

Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls
away,

Stream'd off from it still; and in her heart she
laugh'd,

Because he had not loosed it from his
helm,

But meant once more perchance to tourney
in it.

And when they gain'd the cell wherein he
slept,

His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them
move.

Then she that saw him lying unsleek, un-
shorn, 810

Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,

Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd
his eyes

Yet blank from sleep, she started to him,
saying,

'Your prize the diamond sent you by the
King.'

His eyes glisten'd; she fancied, 'Is it for
me?'

And when the maid had told him all the
tale

Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the
quest

Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed, 821
And laid the diamond in his open hand.

Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her
face.

At once she slept like water to the floor.
'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied
you.

Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,'
she said;

'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'
What might she mean by that? his large
black eyes,

Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon
her, 830

Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colors on her simple face;

And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in
mind,

And being weak in body said no more,
But did not love the color; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the
fields,

And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured
gates

Far up the dim rich city to her kin; 840
There bode the night, but woke with dawn,
and past

Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave. So day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro

Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little
hurt

Whereof he should be quickly whole, at
times

Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he. But the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him 851
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first
fall,

Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his
life.

And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet
Elaine, 860

Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the
love

Of man and woman when they love their
best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the
death

In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other
world

Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood, 871
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness
made

Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not
live;

For when the blood ran lustier in him
again,

Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
grace 880

Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd
not,

Or short and coldly, and she knew right
well

What the rough sickness meant, but what
this meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her
sight,

And drove her ere her time across the
fields

Far into the rich city, where alone

She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain! it cannot be.
He will not love me. How then? must I
die?'

Then as a little helpless innocent bird, 89
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, 'Must I
die?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to
left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd, 'death
or him,'

Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was
whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three. 900
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet
self

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her
best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
thought,

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of
him

For her own self or hers: 'and do not
shun

To speak the wish most near to your true
heart; 905

Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can.'

Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to
speak.

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her
wish,

And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it
chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your
wish, 915

Seeing I go to-day.' Then out she brake:
'Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word.'
'Speak; that I live to hear,' he said, 'is
yours.'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:

'I have gone mad. I love you; let me die.'
'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'

And innocently extending her white arms,
'Your love,' she said, 'your love — to be your wife.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine.'
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd: 'Nay, the world,
the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.' And she said,

'Not to be with you, not to see your face —
Alas for me then, my good days are done!' —
'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!

This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,

Most common; yea, I know it of mine own self,

And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.

And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy; further—
more,

Even to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke

She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly—
pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then re-
plied,

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father: 'Ay, a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,

'That were against me; what I can I will;
And there that day remain'd, and toward

even
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose the

maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked

shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the

stones,
Unclassing flung the casement back, and

look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve

had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking

sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware

That Lancelot knew that she was looking
at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,

Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away. 980
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat.

His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture

form'd
And grew between her and the pictured

wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,

'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,

Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all
calm. 990

But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant
field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the
owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sorrow-rifted glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love
and Death,'
And sang it; sweetly could she make and
sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in
vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain.
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death
must be.
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade
away;
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless
clay;
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice,
and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,
and thought
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of
the house
That ever shrieks before a death,' and
call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of
dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me
die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we
know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her
eyes.
At last she said: 'Sweet brothers, yester-
night
I seem'd a curious little maid again,

As happy as when we dwelt among the
woods,
And when ye used to take me with the
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it; there ye first
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I
dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, "Now shall I have my
will;"

And there I woke, but still the wish re-
main'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at
me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at
me;

Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to
me,

Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me
one.

And there the King will know me and my
love,

And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my child, ye
seem

Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would
ye look

On this proud fellow again, who scorns us
all?'

Then the rough Torre began to heave
and move,

And bluster into stormy sobs and say:
'I never loved him; an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him
down.

Give me good fortune, I will strike him
dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house.'

To whom the gentle sister made reply:
 'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be
 wroth,
 Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
 Not to love me than it is mine to love
 Him of all men who seems to me the high-
 est.' 1070

'Highest?' the father answer'd, echoing
 'highest?'—
 He meant to break the passion in her—
 'nay,
 Daughter, I know not what you call the
 highest;
 But this I know, for all the people know it,
 He loves the Queen, and in an open shame,
 And she returns his love in open shame;
 If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
 'Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
 For anger. These are slanders; never yet
 Was noble man but made ignoble talk. 1081
 He makes no friend who never made a foe.
 But now it is my glory to have loved
 One peerless, without stain; so let me pass,
 My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
 Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
 And greatest, tho' my love had no return.
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
 Thanks, but you work against your own
 desire,
 For if I could believe the things you say
 I should but die the sooner; wherefore
 cease, 1091
 Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean and
 die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and
 gone,
 She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
 Besought Lorraine to write as she devised
 A letter, word for word; and when he
 ask'd,
 'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
 Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,
 'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the
 world, 1100
 But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote
 The letter she devised; which being writ
 And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and
 true,
 Deny me not,' she said—'ye never yet
 Denied my fancies—this, however strange,

My latest. Lay the letter in my hand
 A little ere I die, and close the hand
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
 And when the heat has gone from out my
 heart, 1109
 Then take the little bed on which I died
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the
 Queen's
 For richness, and me also like the Queen
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
 To take me to the river, and a barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for mine own
 self,
 And none of you can speak for me so well.
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone
 Go with me; he can steer and row, and
 he 1121
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased. Her father promised; where-
 upon
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her
 death
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the
 eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from un-
 derground, 1130
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent
 brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that
 shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the
 barge,
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the
 house,
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
 So those two brethren from the chariot
 took
 And on the black decks laid her in her
 bed, 1140
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
 The silken case with braided blazonings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to
 her,

'Sister, farewell forever,' and again,
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the
 dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the
 flood —
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter — all her bright hair streaming
 down —
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold 1150
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in
 white
 All but her face, and that clear-featured
 face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
 But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
 craved
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and
 blow,
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds; for
 he saw 1160
 One of her house, and sent him to the
 Queen
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
 With such and so unmoved a majesty
 She might have seem'd her statue, but that
 he,
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her
 feet
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
 The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
 walls,
 And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side, 1170
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the
 stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd:
 'Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for you,
 These jewels, and make me happy, making
 them
 An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These are
 words;
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
 In speaking, yet O, grant my worship of it

Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin
 in words 1181
 Perchance, we both can pardon; but, my
 Queen,
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
 Should have in it an absoluter trust
 To make up that defect: let rumors be.
 When did not rumors fly? these, as I
 trust
 That you trust me in your own nobleness,
 I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away,
 the Queen 1190
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them
 off,
 Till all the place whereon she stood was
 green;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive
 hand
 Received at once and laid aside the gems
 There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be I am quicker of belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man and
 wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill, 1200
 It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done despite and
 wrong
 To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are
 these?
 Diamonds for me! they had been thrice
 their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
 For her! for your new fancy. Only this
 Grant me, I pray you; have your joys
 apart. 1210
 I doubt not that, however changed, you
 keep
 So much of what is graceful; and myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of cour-
 tesy
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move and
 rule,
 So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
 A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her
 pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her, she shines
me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck ¹²²⁰

O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds — hers not
mine —

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my
will —

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for
heat,

Flung them, and down they flash'd, and
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it
were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half dis-
dain ¹²³⁰

At love, life, all things, on the window
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the
barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door;
to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over tier, ¹²⁴⁰
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes
that ask'd,

'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard
face,

As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they
said:

'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so
fair!

Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh
and blood?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland.' ¹²⁵¹

While thus they babbled of the King, the
King

Came girt with knights. Then turn'd the
tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel and the doors.

So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd
at her, ¹²⁵⁹

And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it; this
was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the
Lake,

I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.

I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my
death.

And therefore to our Lady Guinevere, ¹²⁷⁰
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her
lips
Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them
all: ¹²⁸⁰

'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's
death

Right heavy am I; for good she was and
true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.

Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I
gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love.
To this I call my friends in testimony, ¹²⁹⁰
Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature; what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have
died,
I might have put my wits to some rough
use,
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen —
Sea was her wrath, yet working after
storm:
'Ye might at least have done her so much
grace,
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from
her death.'
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers
fell,
He adding: 'Queen, she would not be con-
tent
Save that I wedded her, which could not
be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world,
she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken
down,
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her — then
would I,
More specially were he she wedded poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow
seas,
To keep them in all joyance. More than
this
I could not; this she would not, and she
died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: 'O my
knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all
the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd Order of their Table
Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.

And when the knights had laid her comely
head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them: 'Let her
tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!' which was
wrought

Thereafter; but when now the lords and
dames

And people, from the high door streaming,
brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved
apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lance-
lot,

Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.'
He answer'd with his eyes upon the
ground,

'That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen,
forgiven.'

But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection
said:

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I
have

Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the
tilt

Strike down the lusty and long practis'd
knight

And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to
God,

Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
shaped, it seems,

By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely
man

Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the
Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot: 'Fair she was,
my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a
heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be
bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said
the King. ¹³⁶⁹
'Let love be free; free love is for the best.
And, after heaven, on our dull side of
death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he
went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her mov-
ing down, ¹³⁸⁰
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself: 'Ah, simple heart and
sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for
thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at
last—
Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous
pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and
fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to
me? ¹³⁹¹
Mine own name shames me, seeming a re-
proach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms—the won-
drous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters, eve and
morn
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair, my
child,

As a king's son," and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er
it be! ¹⁴⁰¹
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and
have it.
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me; but what use in
it?
To make men worse by making my sin
known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must
break
These bonds that so defame me. Not with-
out ¹⁴¹⁰
She wills it—would I, if she will'd it?
nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may
God,
I pray him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the
hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful
pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE HOLY GRAIL

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess
done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd
the Pure,
Had past into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the
cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after,
died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the
rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into his
heart ¹⁰
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came; and as they
sat

Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening
half

The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into
smoke

Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree
smoke,

Spring after spring, for half a hundred
years;

For never have I known the world with-
out,

Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale. But
thee,

When first thou camest—such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice—I
knew

For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to
coins,

Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and
now

Tell me, what drove thee from the Table
Round,

My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such
passion mine.

But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle
out

Among us in the jousts, while women
watch

Who wins, who falls, and waste the spirit-
ual strength

Within us, better offer'd up to heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail!
—I trust

We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here
too much

We moulder—as to things without I
mean—

Yet one of your own knights, a guest of
ours,

Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What
is it?

The phantom of a cup that comes and
goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd
Percivale.

'The cup, the cup itself, from which our
Lord

Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat—
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good
saint

Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our
Lord.

And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at
once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the
times

Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and disap-
pear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old
books I know

That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury, ⁶⁰
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
build;

And there he built with wattles from the
marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but
seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid

With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and
shot

Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And
yet,

Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous
race,

Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the
more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or
what

Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King

Arthur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts be-
came

Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come
again;

But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it
would come,

And heal the world of all their wicked-
ness!

"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it
come

To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay,"
said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as
snow."

And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I
thought

She might have risen and floated when I
saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her
eyes

Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness!

And "O my brother Percivale," she said,
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy
Grail;

For, waked at dead of night, I heard a
sound

As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's
use

To hunt by moonlight.' And the slender
sound

As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch
with hand,

Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver
beam,

And down the long beam stole the Holy
Grail,

Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were
dyed

With rosy colors leaping on the wall; ¹²⁰
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the
walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and
pray,

That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be
heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of
this ¹²⁰

To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever
moved

Among us in white armor, Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art beauti-
ful!"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight,
and none

In so young youth was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he
heard

My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze; ¹⁴⁰
His eyes became so like her own, they
seem'd

Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some
said

Begotten by enchantment — chattering
they,

Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies — we know not whence
they come;

For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore
away

Clean from her forehead all that wealth of
hair ¹⁵⁰

Which made a silken mat-work for her
feet;

And out of this she plaited broad and long

A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread

And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,

Saying: "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,

O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,

I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.

Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,¹⁶⁰

And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king

Far in the spiritual city;" and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind

On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle. O brother,

In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,

Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out

The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll¹⁷⁰
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Perilous,"

Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,

"No man could sit but he should lose himself."

And once by misadventure Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,

While the great banquet lay along the hall,¹⁸⁰

That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard

A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.

And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day;

And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it¹⁹⁰ past.

But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and swore a vow.

'I swear a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride

A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad swore the

vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,
swore,²⁰⁰

And Lancelot swore, and many among the knights,

And Gawain swore, and louder than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,

'What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the King,

Was not in hall; for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit bold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help; for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky

arm²¹⁰
Red-rent with hooks of brambie, and all she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest. So the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees

That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit

Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there! the roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke !²²⁰

Pray heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt !"

For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago !
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing
brook,²³⁰

Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.

And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall;
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,

And on the fourth are men with growing wings,

And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.²⁴⁰

And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown

And both the wings are made of gold, and flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, "We have still a king."

'And, brother, had you known our hall within,

Broader and higher than any in all the lands !

Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,

And all the light that falls upon the hoard
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of
our King.²⁵⁰

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount
and mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank; and who shall blazon it? when
and how? —

O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast away !

'So to this hall full quickly rode the King,

In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,
wrap²⁶⁰

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.

And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw

The golden dragon sparkling over all;
And many of those who burnt the hold,
their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and sear'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest; and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale," —
Because the hall was all in tumult — some
Vowing, and some protesting, — "what is
this?"²⁷⁰

'O brother, when I told him what had chanced,

My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done
in vain,

Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights,"
he cried,

"Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."

Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn." "Yea,
yea," said he,

"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,²⁸⁰

But since I did not see the holy thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn
our vows."

"Lo, now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud?

What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
 "But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail, 290
 I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
 'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me!'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King,
 "for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.
 Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
 Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
 A sign to main this Order which I made.
 But ye that follow but the leader's bell," —
 Brother, the King was hard upon his knights, —

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song, 300
 And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
 Five knights at once, and every younger knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
 Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
 What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales" —

For thus it pleased the King to range me close

After Sir Galahad; — "nay," said he, "but men

With strength and will to right the wrong'd,
 of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence flat, 310
 Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood —

But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being made.
 Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm

Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,
 This chance of noble deeds will come and go

Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most, 320

Return no more. Ye think I show myself
 Too dark a prophet. Come now, let us meet
 The morrow morn once more in one full field

Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,

Before ye leave him for this quest, may count

The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,

Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from underground,

All the great Table of our Arthur closed
 And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
 So many lances broken — never yet 331
 Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came;

And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew
 So many knights that all the people cried,
 And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
 Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake from underground —

O brother, had you known our Camelot,
 Built by old kings, age after age, so old
 The King himself had fears that it would fall, 341

So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs

Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
 Met foreheads all along the street of those
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long

Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks

Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
 Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers

Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan, 351
 At all the corners, named us each by name,
 Calling "God speed!" but in the ways below

The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor

Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak

For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,

Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,

"This madness has come on us for our sins."
 So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,

Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way. 360

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind. 370
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This quest is not for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook, 380
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the quest;"
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone 390
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,

And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,

"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone. 400

'And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field
The plowman left his plowing and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail
The milkmaid left her milking and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armor with a crown of gold 410
About a casque all jewels, and his horse
In golden armor jewelled everywhere;
And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,
And seem'd to me the lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone 420
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top a city wall'd; the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!"
And glad was I and elomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there
I found 430

Only one man of an exceeding age.
"Where is that goodly company," said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and he
had

Scarcely any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
"Whence and what art thou?" and even
as he spoke

Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more and cried in
grief,

"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust!"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the
vale 441

Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he
said:

"O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is
thine,'

And all her form shone forth with sudden
light 450

So that the angels were amazed, and she
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east.
But her thou hast not known; for what is
this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy
sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad." When the hermit made an
end,

In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in
prayer. 460

And there the hermit slaked my burning
thirst,

And at the sacrificing of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the
Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine.
I saw the fiery face as of a child

That smote itself into the bread and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to
see,

This holy thing, fail'd from my side, nor
come 470

Cover'd, but moving with me night and
day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and aliding down the blacken'd
marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I
rode,

Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made
them mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore
them down,

And broke thro' all, and in the strength of
this 480

Come victor. But my time is hard at
hand,

And hence I go, and one will crown me
king

Far in the spiritual city; and come thou,
too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

'While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling
on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.

Then, when the day began to wane, we
went.

'There rose a hill that none but man
could climb,

Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-
courses — 490

Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,
storm

Round us and death; for every moment
glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick and
thick

The lightnings here and there to left and
right

Struck. till the dry old trunks about us,
dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire. And at the base we found

On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of
men,⁵⁰⁰
Not to be crost, save that some ancient
king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many
a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge by
bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all the
heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as
seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God. And first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver-shining armor starry-clear; ⁵¹¹
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous
cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were — I saw not whence it
came.
And when the heavens open'd and blazed
again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me, ⁵²¹
For now I knew the veil had been with-
drawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond
the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —
Strike round the sea; and from the star
there shot ⁵³⁰
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall
see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning
the deep,
And how my feet recrost the deathful
ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and
thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy man,

Glad that no phantom vex me more, re-
turn'd
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's
wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, — 'for in
sooth ⁵⁴⁰
These ancient books — and they would win
thee — teen,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
Who read but on my breviary with ease,
Till my head swims, and then go forth and
pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
To these old walls — and mingle with our
folk; ⁵⁴⁹
And knowing every honest face of theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-
in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away;
Or lulling random squabbles when they
rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market-
cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of
mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs —
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad, ⁵⁶¹
Came ye on none but phantoms in your
quest,
No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:
'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O, my
brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to
thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and
vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to
wan ⁵⁷⁰
And meagre, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of
it.

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of
old

A slender page about her father's hall, 380
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were
hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair
morn, 390

I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first
time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to
me.

Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering
fires,

And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and
tongue: 601

"We have heard of thee; thou art our
greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe.
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own
self,

And even the holy quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad 610
Cared not for her nor anything upon earth."

Then said the monk: "Poor men, when
yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house
of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to
warm

My cold heart with a friend; but O the
pity

To find thine own first love once more — to
hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine
arms, 620

Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside.
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed!
For we that want the warmth of double
life,

We that are plagued with dreams of some-
thing sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —

Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,

Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,

But live like an old badger in his earth,

With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none be-
side, 630

None of your knights?"

"Yea, so," said Percivale:

"One night my pathway swerving east, I
saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors

All in the middle of the rising moon,

And toward him spur'd, and hail'd him,
and he me,

And each made joy of either. Then he
ask'd:

"Where is he? hast thou seen him —
Lancelot? — Once,"

Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me
— mad,

And maddening what he rode; and when
I cried,

'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest 640

So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me
not!

I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way!'
So vanish'd."

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,

Because his former madness, once the talk

And scandal of our table, had return'd;

For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him

That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors

Beyond the rest. He well had been content

Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have
seen, 651

The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,

Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the holy quest.
If God would send the vision, well; if not,
The quest and he were in the hands of
Heaven.

‘And then, with small adventure met,
Sir Bors

Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their
craggs,

Our race and blood, a remnant that were
left ⁶⁶⁰

Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven; and their
wise men

Were strong in that old magic which can
trace

The wandering of the stars, and scoff’d at
him

And this high quest as at a simple thing,
Told him he follow’d — almost Arthur’s
words —

A mocking fire: “what other fire than he
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom
blows,

And the sea rolls, and all the world is
warm’d?”

And when his answer chafed them, the
rough crowd, ⁶⁷⁰

Hearing he had a difference with their
priests,

Seized him, and bound and plunged him
into a cell

Of great piled stones; and lying bounden
there

In darkness thro’ innumerable hours

He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle — what else? —

Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and
fell,

Such as no wind could move; and thro’ the
gap

Glimmer’d the streaming scud. Then came
a night

Still as the day was loud, and thro’ the
gap ⁶⁸⁰

The seven clear stars of Arthur’s Table
Round —

For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro’ such a round in heaven, we named
the stars,

Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —
And these, like bright eyes of familiar
friends,

In on him shone: “And then to me, to
me,”

Said good Sir Bors, “beyond all hopes of
mine,

Who scarce had pray’d or ask’d it for my-
self —

Across the seven clear stars — O grace to
me! —

In color like the fingers of a hand ⁶⁹⁰

Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal’d

A sharp quick thunder.” Afterwards, a
maid,

Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.’

To whom the monk: ‘And I remember
now

That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board,
And mighty reverent at our grace was he;
A square-set man and honest, and his eyes,
An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a
cloud, ⁷⁰²

But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye
reach’d

The city, found ye all your knights re-
turn’d,

Or was there sooth in Arthur’s prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the
King?’

Then answer’d Percivale: ‘And that
can I, ⁷⁰⁸

Brother, and truly; since the living words
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
Pass not from door to door and out again,
But sit within the house. O, when we
reach’d

The city, our horses stumbling as they
trode

On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack’d basilisks, and splinter’d cocka-
trices,

And shatter’d talbots, which had left the
stones

Raw that they fell from, brought us to the
hall.

‘And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the
quest,

Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,

And those that had not, stood before the
King, 721

Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me
hail,

Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for
thee

On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded for
us

Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now —
the quest, 730

This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glaston-
bury?"

"So when I told him all thyself hast
heard,

Ambrosius, and my fresh but firt resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,
ask'd

Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest for
thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for
such as I.

Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the quest was not for
me; 740

For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this
gale

Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant
to me."

"He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom
at first

He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
push'd

Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his
hand, 750

Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,
stood,

Until the King espied him, saying to him,
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;"
and Bors,

"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

"Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for
the rest

Spake but of sundry perils in the storm.
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last; 760
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King,
"my friend,

Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for
thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot,
with a groan;

"O King!" — and when he paused me-
thought I spied

A dying fire of madness in his eyes —

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for
slime, 768

Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome
flower

And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy
knights

Swore, I swore with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I
spake

To one most holy saint, who wept and said
That, save they could be pluck'd asunder,
all

My quest were but in vain; to whom I
vow'd 780

That I would work according as he will'd
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and
strove

To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away.
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my
sword

And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I
came

All in my folly to the naked shore, 790
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse
grasses grew;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,

to loud a blast along the shore and sea,
 [e could not hear the waters for the blast,
 'ho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
 Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
 Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
 And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a
 boat,

half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;
 And in my madness to myself I said,
 I will embark and I will lose myself,
 And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
 Burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
 Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
 And with me drove the moon and all the
 stars;

And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
 I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
 And felt the boat shock earth, and looking
 up,

behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,
 With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
 And steps that met the breaker! There
 was none

stood near it but a lion on each side
 That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up the
 stairs,

There drew my sword. With sudden-
 flaring manes
 Those two great beasts rose upright like a
 man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
 And, when I would have smitten them,
 Heard a voice,
 Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the
 beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with vio-
 lence

The sword was dash'd from out my hand,
 and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past;
 But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
 No bench nor table, painting on the wall
 Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost
 tower

To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand
 steps

With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to
 climb

For ever; at the last I reach'd a door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
 'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!'
 Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
 It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
 As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
 away —

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and
 eyes!

And but for all my madness and my sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
 That which I saw; but what I saw was
 veill'd
 And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot
 left
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
 words, —

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege,"
 he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten
 field?

But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men
 mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than our
 least.

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
 swear,

I will be deafier than the blue-eyed cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward."

"Deafier," said the blameless King,
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
 Being too blind to have desire to see.
 But if indeed there came a sign from
 heaven,

Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Perci-
 vale,
 For these have seen according to their
 sight.

For every fiery prophet in old times,

And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could
but speak
His music by the framework and the
chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot; never
yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and
man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might
be,
With such a closeness but apart there
grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest
of,
Some root of knighthood and pure noble-
ness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its
flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my
knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wander-
ing fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and
gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a
tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision
came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right them-
selves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in
vain,
However they may crown him other
where.

"And some among you held that if the
King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn
the vow.
Not easily, seeing that the King must
guard
That which he rules, and is but as the
hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,

Who may not wander from the allotted
field
Before his work be done, but, being done.
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they
come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not
earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not
light,
This air that smites his forehead is not
air
But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again. Ye have seen what ye
have seen."

'So spake the King; I knew not all he
meant.'

NOTE.—After *The Holy Grail*, two Idylls are
omitted, *Pelleas and Ettarre* and *The Last
Tournament* (see note, p. 699).

The last stanza of *The Last Tournament* is a
fitting introduction to the pathos of *Guinevere* :—

That night came Arthur home, and while he
climbed,
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark,—about
his foot
A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
'What art thou?' and the voice about his feet
Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again.'

GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and
sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice. One low light betwixt them
burn'd.
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the
face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was
still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight

Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast 10
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance. For this
He chill'd the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White
Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought

To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all his
aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot. 20

For thus it chanced one morn when all
the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd
the may,
Had been — their wont — a-maying and
return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her
best

Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wildest and the worst; and more than
this

He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by 30
Spied where he couch'd, and as the garden-
dener's hand

Picks from the colewort a green cater-
pillar,

So from the high wall and the flowering
grove

Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the
beel,

And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the prince tho' marr'd
with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
Made such excuses as he might, and these
Full knightly without scorn. For in those
days

No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in
scorn; 40

But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, in
him

By those whom God had made full-limb'd
and tall,

Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,

And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holt
To raise the prince, who rising twice or
thrice

Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,
and went;

But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone 51
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she
laugh'd

Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who
cries,

'I shudder, some one steps across my
grave;'

Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for in-
deed

She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and
hers

Would be for evermore a name of scorn. 60
Henceforward rarely could she front in
hall,

Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent
eye.

Henceforward too, the Powers that tend
the soul,

To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began

To vex and plague her. Many a time for
hours,

Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and
went

Before her, or a vague spiritual fear — 70
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking
doors,

Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the
walls —

Held her awake; or if she slept she dream'd
An awful dream, for then she seem'd to
stand

On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at
her

A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it till it touch'd her, and she
turn'd —

When lo ! her own, that broadening from
her feet, ⁸⁰
And blackening, swallow'd all the land,
and in it

Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew,
Till even the clear face of the guileless
King,

And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane ; and at the last she
said :

' O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own
land,

For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again some evil chance
Will make the amouldering scandal break
and blaze ⁹⁰

Before the people and our lord the King.'
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
And still they met and met. Again she
said,

' O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
hence.'

And then they were agreed upon a night —
When the good King should not be there
— to meet

And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they
met

And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to
eye,

Low on the border of her couch they sat ¹⁰⁰
Stammering and staring. It was their last
hour,

A madness of farewells. And Modred
brought

His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony ; and crying with full voice,
' Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,'
aroused

Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong,
and he fell

Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare
him off,

And all was still. Then she, ' The end is
come, ¹⁰⁹

And I am shamed for ever ;' and he said :
' Mine be the shame, mine was the sin ;
but rise,

And fly to my strong castle over-seas.
There will I hide thee till my life shall
end,

There hold thee with my life against the
world.'

She answer'd : ' Lancelot, wilt thou hold me
so ?

Nay, friend, for we have taken our fare-
wells.

Would God that thou couldst hide me from
myself !

Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
Unwedded ; yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary, ¹¹²
And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her
horse,

Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
And then they rode to the divided way,
There kiss'd, and parted weeping ; for he
past,

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering wass
and weald,

And heard the spirits of the waste and
weald

Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
them moan.

And in herself she moan'd, ' Too late, too
late !' ¹²⁰

Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
morn,

A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,
Croak'd, and she thought, ' He spies a field
of death ;

For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the
court,

Begin to slay the folk and spoil the land'

And when she came to Almesbury she
spake

There to the nuns, and said, ' Mine en-
emies

Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name to whom ye yield it till her time
To tell you ;' and her beauty, grace, and
power

Wrought as a charm upon them, and they
spared

To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among the
nuns,

Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name,
nor sought,

Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
But communed only with the little maid,

Who pleased her with a babbling heedless-
ness
Which often lured her from herself; but
now, ¹⁵⁰
This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd the
realm
And leagued him with the heathen, while
the King
Was waging war on Lancelot. Then she
thought,
'With what a hate the people and the
King
Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon her
hands
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so
late!
What hour, I wonder now?' and when she
drew
No answer, by and by began to hum ¹⁶⁰
An air the nuns had taught her: 'Late, so
late!'
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd
up, and said,
'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
weep.'
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and
chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent,
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now. ¹⁷¹

'No light! so late! and dark and chill the
night!
) let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so
sweet?
) let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passion-
ately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the
sad Queen. ¹⁸⁰
Then said the little novice prattling to
her:

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words—the words of one so
small,

Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given—
Comfort your sorrows, for they do not
flow

From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateli-
ness.

But weigh your sorrows with our lord the
King's,

And weighing find them less; for gone is
he ¹⁹⁰

To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot
there,

Round that strong castle where he holds
the Queen;

And Modred whom he left in charge of
all,

The traitor—Ah, sweet lady, the King's
grief

For his own self, and his own Queen, and
realm,

Must needs be thrice as great as any of
ours!

For me, I thank the saints, I am not great;
For if there ever come a grief to me

I cry my cry in silence, and have done;
None knows it, and my tears have brought
me good. ²⁰⁰

But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet this
grief

Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That, howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud;
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King it could not be. ²¹⁰

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the
Queen,

'Will the child kill me with her innocent
talk?'

But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the
realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this all is woman's
grief,
That she is woman, whose disloyal life

Hath wrought confusion in the Table
Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years
ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders,
there²²⁰
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself
again,
'Will the child kill me with her foolish
prate?'
But openly she spake and said to her,
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables
Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously:
'Yea, but I know; the land was full of
signs²³⁰
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table—at the founding of
it,

And rode thereto from Lyonesse; and he
said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused, and turning
— there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,²⁴⁰
He saw them—headland after headland
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west.
And in the light the white mermaiden
swam,

And strong man-breasted things stood from
the sea,

And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the
land,

To which the little elves of chasm and
cleft

Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit
woods²⁴⁹

Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
Come dashing down on a tall wayside
flower,

That shook beneath them as the thistle
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the
seed.

And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and
broke

Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the
hall;²⁵⁰

And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd; for every
knight

Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the
butts

While the wine ran; so glad were spirits
and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat
bitterly,

'Were they so glad? ill prophets were
they all,²⁵⁵

Spirits and men. Could none of them fore-
see,

Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fallen upon the
realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously again:
'Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father
said,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming
wave;

And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-
tops,²⁶⁰

When round him bent the spirits of the
hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like
flame.

So said my father—and that night the
bard

Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the
King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at
those

Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois.

For there was no man knew from whence
he came;

But after tempest, when the long wave
broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude
and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and
then ²⁹⁰

They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Tintagil by the-Cornish sea,
And that was Arthur, and they foster'd
him

Till he by miracle was approven King;
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could he
find

A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well might change the
world.

But even in the middle of his song ³⁰⁰
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the
harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would
have fallen,

But that they stay'd him up; nor would he
tell

His vision; but what doubt that he fore-
saw

This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they have
set her on,

Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor
spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd
hands, ³⁰⁹

Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her gad-
ding tongue

Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
Which my good father told me, check me
too

Nor let me shame my father's memory,
one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself would
say

Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers
back, ³¹⁹

And left me; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—

And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
But pray you, which had noblest, while
you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the
King?

Then the pale Queen look'd up and an-
swer'd her:

'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and the King
In open battle or the tilting-field ³³⁰
Forbore his own advantage, and these
two

Were the most nobly-manner'd men of
all;

For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such
fair fruit?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-
fold

Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the
Queen:

'O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-
walls, ³⁴⁰

What knowest thou of the world and all its
lights

And shadows, all the wealth and all the
woe?

If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he scape the doom of
fire,

And weep for her who drew him to his
doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for
both;

But I should all as soon believe that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would
be ³⁵⁰

Such as they are, were you the sinful
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where
she would heal;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat

Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who
cried:

'Such as thou art be never maiden more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon and harry me, petty spy
And traitress!' When that storm of an-
ger brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
White as her veil, and stood before the
Queen 361

As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
And when the Queen had added, 'Get
thee hence!'

Fled frightened. Then that other left alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself: 'The simple, fearful
child

Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful
guilt,

Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, Heaven, for surely I re-
pent! 370

For what is true repentance but in
thought —

Not even in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to
us?

And I have sworn never to see him more,
To see him more.'

And even in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot
came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest
man,

Ambassador, to yield her to his lord 380
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, — for
the time

Was may-time, and as yet no sin was
dream'd, —

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'
the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale 390
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repose or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on again,

Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a
trance,

And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
Came to that point where first she saw the
King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to
find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought
him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not
like him,

'Not like my Lancelot' — while she
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
again,

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery
ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King!' She
sat

Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed
feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she
fell,

And grovelling with her face against the
floor.

There with her milk-white arms and shad-
owly hair

She made her face a darkness from the
King,

And in the darkness heard his armed feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then a
voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but, tho' charged,
the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee. 401
The children born of thee are sword and
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern
Sea;

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right
arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode with
 me,
 Have everywhere about this land of Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
 And knowest thou now from whence I come
 — from him, ⁴³⁰
 From waging bitter war with him; and he,
 That did not shun to smite me in worse
 way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
 He spared to lift his hand against the King
 Who made him knight. But many a knight
 was slain;
 And many more and all his kith and kin
 Slave to him, and abode in his own land.
 And many more when Modred raised revolt,
 Forgetful of their truth and fealty, gave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
 And of this remnant will I leave a part, ⁴⁴¹
 True men who love me still, for whom I
 live,
 To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
 Not but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
 Fear not; thou shalt be guarded till my
 death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet my
 doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
 That I the King should greatly care to
 live; ⁴⁴⁹
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
 Fear with me for the last time while I
 show,
 Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast
 sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and their law
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a
 deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
 The realms together under me, their Head,
 That fair Order of my Table Round, ⁴⁶⁰
 A glorious company, the flower of men,
 To serve as model for the mighty world,
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 Made them lay their hands in mine and
 swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience as
 their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the
 Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
 To honor his own word as if his God's, ⁴⁷⁰
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew
 Of no more subtle master under heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable words
 And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes a
 man. ⁴⁸⁰
 And all this throve before I wedded thee,
 Believing, "Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!"
 Then came thy shameful sin with Lance-
 lot;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;
 Then others, following these my mightiest
 knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair
 names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
 Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of
 mine ⁴⁹⁰
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe and
 wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he
 live,
 To sit once more within his lonely hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
 As in the golden days before thy sin.
 For which of us who might be left could
 speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at
 thee?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to
 room, ⁵⁰¹
 And I should evermore be vexed with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love
 thy lord,
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
 shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public foes
 Who either for his own or children's sake,

To save his blood from scandal, lets the
 wife 511
 Whom he knows false abide and rule the
 house:
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the
 crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and
 saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the
 pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the
 young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he that
 reigns! 520
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching
 heart
 Than thou reseatd in thy place of light,
 The mockery of my people and their
 bane!

He paused, and in the pause she crept an
 inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse
 neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy
 crimes; 520
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on
 that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming
 death,—
 When first I learnt thee hidden here,—is
 past.
 The pang—which, while I weigh'd thy
 heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
 Made my tears burn—is also past—in
 part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I, 540
 Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives! do thou for thine own soul the
 rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?
 O golden hair, with which I used to play
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,

And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with
 thee—

I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine.
 But Lancelot's; nay, they never were the
 King's.

I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine
 own flesh, 55

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
 "I loathe thee;" yet not less, O Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my
 life

So far that my doom is, I love thee still.
 Let no man dream but that I love thee
 still.

Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul.
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ.
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure
 We two may meet before high God, as
 thou 55

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and
 know

I am thine husband— not a smaller soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that.
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I
 hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet
 blow.

They summon me their King to lead mine
 hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,
 Where I must strike against the man they
 call

My sister's son—no kin of mine, who
 leagues 55

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen
 and knights,

Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet
 myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious
 doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the
 event;

But hither shall I never come again,
 Never lie by thy side, see thee no more—
 Farewell!

And while she grovelling'd at his feet.
 She felt the King's breath wander o'er her
 neck,

And in the darkness o'er her fallen head
 Perceived the waving of his hands that
 blest. 56

Then, listening till those armed steps
were gone,
Lose the pale Queen, and in her anguish
found
The casement: 'peradventure,' so she
thought,
If I might see his face, and not be seen.
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each a
light
stood, and he gave them charge about the
Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was
lower'd,
To which for crest the golden dragon
clung
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
Vet with the mists and smitten by the
lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
And even then he turn'd; and more and
more
The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him
gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and
cried aloud,
O Arthur! there her voice brake sud-
denly,
Then — as a stream that spouting from a
cliff
falls in mid air, but gathering at the base
le-makes itself, and flashes down the
vale —
Vent on in passionate utterance:

'Gone — my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer'd his
farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the
King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him
mine?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution. He, the King,
Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill myself?

What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to
months,
The months will add themselves and make
the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the
world —
What else? what hope? I think there was
a hope,
Except he mock'd me when he spake of
hope;
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath for-
given
My wickedness to him, and left me hope
That in mine own heart I can live down
sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God! Ah great and gentle
lord,
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights —
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that
took
Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the
height
To which I would not or I could not
climb —
I thought I could not breathe in that fine
air,
That pure severity of perfect light —
I yearn'd for warmth and color which I
found
In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou
art,
Thou art the highest and most human too,
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?
Now — ere he goes to the great battle?
none!
Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair
world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature
here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known;

It would have been my pleasure had I
seen.
We needs must love the highest when we
see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand
Grasp'd made her vail her eyes. She look'd
and saw
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to
her,
'Yca, little maid, for am I not forgiven ?'
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns 660
All round her, weeping; and her heart was
loosed
Within her, and she wept with these and
said:

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who
broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-
walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying,
"Shame!"
I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me
still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
Wear black and white, and be a nun like
you, 671
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with
your feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at
your joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your
shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute
dole
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal
mine own; 680
And so wear out in alms-deed and in
prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the
King.'

She said. They took her to themselves;
and she
Still hoping, fearing 'Is it yet too late ?'

Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess
died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pen-
ance life,
And for the power of ministrations in her.
And likewise for the high rank she had
borne,
Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there, an abbess
past 690
To where beyond these voices there is
peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights
Told, when the man was no more than a
voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedi-
vere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering
host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the
King:

'I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His
fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and
die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world
But had not force to shape it as he would.
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and
dim,
And have not power to see it as it is —
Perchance, because we see not to the
close; —
For I, being simple, thought to work His
will,
And have but stricken with the sword in
vain,
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death !
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall not die.⁵

Then, ere that last⁶ weird battle in the west,
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
 Went shrilling: 'Hollow, hollow all delight !

Hail, King ! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.

Farewell ! there is an isle of rest for thee.
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight !'

And fainter onward, like wild birds that change

Their season in the night and wail their way

From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream

Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
 When all is lost, and wife and child with wail

Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd:

'Who spake? A dream. O, light upon the wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:

'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;

But in their stead thy name and glory cling

To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever; but as yet thou shalt not pass.

Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;

And care not thou for dreams from him,
 but rise —

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,

And with him many of thy people, and knights

Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown

Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.

Right well in heart they know thee for the King.

Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 'Far other is this battle in the west

Whereto we move than when we strove in youth,

And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,

Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,

And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine

To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights himself.

And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke

That strikes them dead is as my death to me.

Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I saw

One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,

And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse —
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,

And the long mountains ended in a coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away

The phantom circle of a roaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,

And he that fled no further fly the King;
 And there, that day when the great light

of heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they

closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.

A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,

Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it,
 drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was
 cold
 With formless fear; and even on Arthur
 fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he
 fought.
 For friend and foe were shadows in the
 mist,
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom
 he slew;
 And some had visions out of golden youth,
 And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
 Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in single
 fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard
 mail hewn,
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,
 the crash
 Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and
 shrieks
 After the Christ, of those who falling down
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the
 mist;
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor
 knights,
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the
 lungs
 In that close mist, and cryings for the
 light,
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after wail
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
 Or death-like swoon, thus over all that
 shore,
 Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous
 day
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
 came
 A bitter wind, clear from the north, and
 blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced across the
 field
 Of battle. But no man was moving there;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave

Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up and
 down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
 And shiver'd brands that once had fought
 with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy shores
 The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
 And whiter than the mist that all day long
 Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that
 shakes the world,
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon we
 move,
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,
 My dead, as tho' they had not died for
 me? —
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
 Confusion, till I know not what I am,
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king;
 Behold, I seem but king among the dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: 'My
 King!
 King everywhere! and so the dead have
 kings,
 There also will I worship thee as king.
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
 Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that
 brought
 The heathen back among us, yonder stands
 Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of this
 house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath
 been my doom.
 But call not thou this traitor of my house
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with
 me.
 My house are rather they who swear my
 vows,
 Yea, even while they brake them, own'd
 me king.
 And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
 When all the purport of my throne hath
 fail'd,
 That quick or dead thou holdest me for
 king.
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
 And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
 Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the
 King

Made at the man. Then Modred smote his
liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen
sword

Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he
fell. 169

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was
deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one 179
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a
sleep

They sleep — the men I loved. I think
that we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were. 189
I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
again

To rule once more — but let what will be
be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou remember-
est how

In those old days, one summer noon, an
arm

rose up from ont the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-
ful,

Holding the sword — and how I row'd
across 200

And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring
me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm —

A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy best will all perform at full, 211
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he
stept,

And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-
ping down

By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-
bur, 220

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the
hilt;

For all the haft twinkled with diamond
sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd 230
There in the many-knotted water-flags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
vere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I
gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me
word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he
smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of many
men.

What good should follow this, if this were
done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to dis-
obey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king de-
mand

An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he
does.

What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,

Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the
deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the af-
tertime

To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honor and much fame were
lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own sor-
row,

And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heav-
ily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
wrath:

'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou
art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights.
In whom should meet the offices of all.

Thou wouldst betray me for the precious
hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee
hence;

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the
sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the
moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd
in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter
shook

By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea. 309

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or
seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
gems 320

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-
ing him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-
ing hard: 330

'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall
die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not
words; 340

Then took with care, and kneeling on one
knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languic
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his
bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the
King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
'Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd, 350

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like
a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and
right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as
he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp - smitten with the dint of armed
heels —

And on a sudden, lo, the level lake, 359
And the long glories of the winter moon!

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately
forms,

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream —
by these

Three queens with crowns of gold — and
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,

And, as it were one voice, an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one
comes, 370

Or hath come, since the making of the
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in
the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There those
three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King,
and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed
his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining
loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face
was white 380
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing
east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd
with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in
rest, 390
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I
go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my
eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the light
that led 400
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dis-
solved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the
years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the
barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to
new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the
world. 410
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have
done
May He within himself make pure! but
thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,
let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep or
goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer 420
Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of
God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard
lawns 430
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer
sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and
sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fitting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedi-
vere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of
dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away. 440

But when that moan had past for ever-
more,

The stillness of the dead world's winter
dawn

Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King
is gone.'

And therewithal came on him the weird
rhyme,

'From the great deep to the great deep he
goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly
clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron crag,
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet,
and cried:

'He passes to be king among the dead, 449
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no
more—

O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat
we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with living
light,

They stood before his throne in silence,
friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars. 451

Thereat once more he moved about, and
clomb

Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the
King,

Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.

And the new sun rose bringing the new
year.

TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee—
Bear witness, that rememberable day,

When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the
Prince

Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life
again

From halfway down the shadow of the
grave

Past with thee thro' thy people and their
love,

And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'
all

Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of
man

And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed, and
clime— 11

Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately
heard

A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to your-
selves;

So loyal is too costly! friends—your love
Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go.'

Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her
voice

And meaning whom the roar of Hougou-
mout 20

Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she
should speak

So feebly? wealthier—wealthier—hour
by hour!

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her
seas?

There rang her voice, when the full city
peal'd

Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their
crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
For ever—broadening England, and her
throne 30

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness; if she
knows

And dreads it we are fallen.—But thou,
my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with
Soul,

Ideal manhood closed in real man,

Rather than that gray king whose name, a
 ghost,
 Streams like a clond, man-shaped, from
 mountain peak,
 And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or
 him
 Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's,
 one
 Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
 That hover'd between war and wanton-
 ness,
 And crownings and dethronements. Take
 withal
 Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
 Heaven
 Will blow the tempest in the distance
 back
 From thine and ours; for some are scared,
 who mark,
 Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
 Waverings of every vane with every wind,
 And wordy trucklings to the transient
 hour,
 And fierce or careless looseners of the
 faith,
 And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,
 Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
 Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
 Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from
 France,
 And that which knows, but careful for
 itself,
 And that which knows not, ruling that
 which knows
 To its own harm. The goal of this great
 world
 Lies beyond sight; yet—if our slowly-
 grown

60

And crown'd Republic's crowning common
 sense,
 That saved her many times, not fail—
 their fears
 Are morning shadows huger than the
 shapes
 That cast them, not those gloomier which
 forego
 The darkness of that battle in the west
 Where all of high and holy dies away.

CROSSING THE BAR

[Publ. 1889]

SUNSET and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar
 When I put out to sea,
 But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the bound-
 less deep
 Turns again home.
 Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;
 For tho' from out our bourne of Time and
 Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have cross'd the bar.

ROBERT BROWNING

PIPPA PASSES

A DRAMA

[Publ. 1841]

PERSONS

PIPPA.
OTTIMA.
SEBALD.
Foreign Students.
GOTTLIEB.
SCHRAMM.
JULES.
PHENE.
Austrian Police.
BLUPHOCKS.
LUIGI and his mother.
POOR GIRLS.
MONSIGNOR and his attendants.

INTRODUCTION

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE
TREVISAN

*large mean airy chamber. A girl, PIPPA, from the
silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY !

aster and more fast,
'er night's brim, day boils at last:
oils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
'here spurting and suppressed it lay,
or not a froth-flake touched the rim
f yonder gap in the solid gray
f the eastern cloud, an hour away;
ut forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
ill the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
oe, reddened, and its seething breast
lickered in bounds, grew gold, then over-
flowed the world.

h Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,
be least of thy gazes or glances,
be they grants thou art bound to or gifts
above measure)

One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks
at thy pleasure)

— My Day, if I squander such labor or
leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flow-
ing,

Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help
and good —

Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, go-
ing,

As if earth turned from work in game-
some mood —

All shall be mine! But thou must treat me
not

As prosperous ones are treated, those who
live

At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;

For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest;
Me, who am only Pippa, — old-year's sor-
row,

Cast off last night, will come again to-
morrow:

Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall bor-
row

Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's
sorrow.

All other men and women that this earth
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another, less:
Thou art my single day, God lends to
leaven

What were all earth else, with a feel of
heaven, —

Sole light that helps me through the year,
thy sun's !

Try now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest
Ones —

And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy
rain

Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane

He will but press the closer, breathe more warm

Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?

And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom

O'er Jules and Phene, — what care bride and groom

Save for their dear selves? 'Tis their marriage-day;

And while they leave church and go home their way,

Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be

Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.

Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve With mist, — will Luigi and his mother grieve —

The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,

She in her age, as Luigi in his youth, For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close

And safe, the sooner that thou art morose, Receives them. And yet once again, outbreak

In storm at night on Monsignor, they make Such stir about, — whom they expect from Rome

To visit Asolo, his brothers' home, And say here masses proper to release

A soul from pain, — what storm dares hurt his peace?

Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward

Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard. But Pippa — just one such mischance would spoil

Her day that lightens the next twelve-month's toil

At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!

And here I let time slip for naught! Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught

With a single splash from my ewer! You that would mock the best pursuer,

Was my basin over-deep? One splash of water ruins you asleep,

And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits Wheeling and counterwheeling,

Reeling, broken beyond healing: Now grow together on the ceiling!

That will task your wits.

Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see

Morsel after morsel flee As merrily, as giddily . . .

Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on, Where settles by degrees the radiant

cripple? Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?

New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple, Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk

bird's poll! Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the

ripple Of ocean, bud there, — fairies watch unroll

Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse

Thick red flame through that dusk-green universe!

I am queen of thee, floweret! And each fleshy blossom

Preserve I not — (safer Than leaves that embower it,

Or shells that embosom) — From weevil and chafer?

Laugh through my pane then; solicit the bee;

Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,

Love thy queen, worship me!

— Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,

Whate'er I please? What shall I please to-day?

My morn, noon, eve and night — how spend my day?

To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk, The whole year round, to earn just bread

and milk: But, this one day, I have leave to go,

And play out my fancy's fullest games — I may fancy all day — and it shall be so —

That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names

Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hillside yonder, through the morning,

Some one shall love me, as the world calls love:

I am no less than Ottima, take warning! The gardens, and the great stone house

above, And other house for shrubs, all glass is front,

Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is
wont, 119

To court me, while old Luca yet reposes:
And therefore, till the shrub-house door
uncloses,

I . . . what now? — give abundant cause
for prate

About me — Ottima, I mean — of late,
Too bold, too confident she 'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town.

How we talk in the little town below!

But love, love, love — there 's better love,
I know!

This foolish love was only day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer:
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon? 131

Their house looks over Orcana valley:
Why should not I be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride —
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and black
bright tresses,

Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!
— So strict was she, the veil 140

Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks — a bride to look at and scarce
touch,

Scarce touch, remember, Jules! For are
not such

Used to be tended, flower-like, every feat-
ure,

As if one's breath would fray the lily of a
creature?

A soft and easy life these ladies lead:
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve 150

From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!

How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no — not envy, this!

— Not envy, sure! — for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me? 160
Mine should have lapped me round from
the beginning;

As little fear of losing it as winning:

Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their
wives,

And only parents' love can last our lives.
At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our turret: what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to
bird — 170

(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than
friends)

— Let me be cared about, kept out of
harm,

And schemed for, safe in love as with a
charm;

Let me be Luigi! If I only knew
What was my mother's face — my father,
too!

Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love
befall 180

Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor? — who to-night will bless the
home

Of his dead brother; and God bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which
mildly burn

With love for all men! I, to-night at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait! — even I already seem to share
In God's love: what does New-year's hymn
declare?

What other meaning do these verses bear?

All service ranks the same with God: 190

*If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work — God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.*

*Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
Costs it more pain that this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed 200
Power shall fall short in or exceed!*

And more of it, and more of it! — oh yes —
I will pass each, and see their happiness,

And envy none — being just as great, no
doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they !
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday !
But let the sun shine ! Wherefore repine ?
— With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass path gray with dew, ²¹⁰
Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse —
No, dared carouse ! *[She enters the street.]*

I. MORNING

*Up the Hillside, inside the Shrub-house. LEUCA'S Wife
OTTIMA, and her Paramour, the German SEBALD.*

*Sebald. [sings.] Let the watching lids wink !
Day's ablaze with eyes,
think !
Deep into the night, drink !*

Ottima. Night ? Such may be your Rhine-
land nights, perhaps ;
But this blood-red beam through the shut-
ter's chink
— We call such light, the morning : let us
see ! ²²⁰
Mind how you grope your way, though !
How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle ! Push the lat-
tice
Behind that frame ! — Nay, do I bid you ?
— Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me ! Why, of
course
The slide-bolt catches. Well, are you con-
tent,
Or must I find you something else to spoil ?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald ! Is 't full
morning ?
Oh, don't speak then !
Seb. Ay, thus it used to be !
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day ; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here ; coun-
try girls ²³¹
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the
hills :
But no, your house was mute, would ope no
eye !
And wisely : you were plotting one thing
there,

Nature, another outside. I looked up —
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light.
Oh, I remember ! — and the peasants
laughed

And said, "The old man sleeps with the
young wife." ²⁴⁰

This house was his, this chair, this window
— his.

Otti. Ah, the clear morning ! I can see
Saint Mark's ;

That black streak is the belfry. Stop :
Vicenza

Should lie . . . there 's Padua, plain enough,
that blue !

Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger !
Seb. *Morning ?*

It seems to me a night with a sun added.

Where 's dew, where 's freshness ? That
bruised plant, I bruised

In getting through the lattice yesterere,
Droops as it did. See, here 's my elbow's
mark ²⁴⁰

I 't the dust o' the sill.

Otti. Oh, shut the lattice, pray !

Seb. Let me lean out. I cannot scent
blood here,

Foul as the morn may be.

There, shut the world out !
How do you feel now, Ottima ? There, curse

The world and all outside ! Let us throw
off

This mask : how do you bear yourself ?
Let 's out

With all of it !

Otti. Best never speak of it.

Seb. Best speak again and yet again of it,
Till words cease to be more than words.

"His blood,"

For instance — let those two words mean,
"His blood"

And nothing more. Notice, I 'll say then
now, ²⁵⁰

"His blood."

Otti. Assuredly if I repented
The deed —

Seb. Repent ? Who should repent, or why ?
What puts that in your head ? Did I once
say

That I repented ?

Otti. No ; I said the deed . . .

Seb. "The deed" and "the event" —
just now it was

"Our passion's fruit" — the devil take such
cant !

Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cut-throat, you are . . .

Otti. Here 's the wine;
I brought it when we left the house above,
And glasses too—wine of both sorts.
Black? White then? ²⁷⁰

Seb. But am not I his cut-throat? What
are you?

Otti. There trudges on his business from
the Duomo

Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet; always in one place at
church,

Close under the stone wall by the south
entry.

I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass—at first, I say, I used:
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on
me, ²⁷⁹

I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?

Seb. No, the white wine—the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way;
Nor does it rise. Pour on! To your black
eyes!

Do you remember last damned New Year's
day?

Otti. You brought those foreign prints.
We looked at them

Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but
saying

His own set wants the proof-mark, roused
him up ²⁹⁰

To hunt them out.

Seb. 'Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face.

Otti. Do you
Fondle me then! Who means to take your
life

For that, my Sebald?

Seb. Hark you, Ottima!
One thing to guard against. We'll not
make much

One of the other—that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday: as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now
first,

To show I love you—yes, still love you—
love you ³⁰⁰

In spite of Luca and what's come to him

—Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and
all!

We'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not
tied

By this: conceive you?

Otti. Love!

Seb. Not tied so sure!

Because though I was wrought upon, have
struck

His insolence back into him—am I
So surely yours?—therefore forever
yours?

Otti. Love, to be wise, (one counsel
pays another,) ³¹⁰

Should we have—months ago, when first
we loved,

For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores—
If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly . . .

Seb. "A thing"—there again—"a
thing!"

Otti. Then, Venus' body, had we come
upon

My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered
close—

Would you have pored upon it? Why per-
sist

In poring now upon it? For 't is here ³²⁰
As much as there in the deserted house:

You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse: I hate . . .
Dare you stay here? I would go back and
hold

His two dead hands, and say, "I hate you
worse,

Luca, than" . . .

Seb. Off, off—take your hands off mine,
'T is the hot evening—off! oh, morning is
it?

Otti. There's one thing must be done;
you know what thing.

Come in and help to carry. We may
sleep ³²⁹

Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.

Seb. What would come, think you, if
we let him lie

Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.

Otti. This dusty pane might serve for
looking-glass.

Three, four — four gray hairs! Is it so
you said
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No — this way.

Seb. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts
of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill
the world, ³⁴⁰
So Luca lives again! — ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you — yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here —
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would . . .

Otti. See!

Seb. No, I'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of, is, at bottom, fine
To suffer; there's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate: ³⁵⁰
What is one young for, else? In age, we'll
sigh

O'er the wild reckless wicked days flown
over;

Still, we have lived: the vice was in its
place.

But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my
purse —

Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you
plucked me ³⁵⁸

These flowers to smell!

Otti. My poor lost friend!

Seb. He gave me
Life, nothing less: what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more —
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
He sat by us at table quietly:

Why must you lean across till our cheeks
touched?

Could he do less than make pretence to
strike?

'T is not the crime's sake — I'd commit ten
crimes

Greater, to have this crime wiped out, un-
done!

And you — O how feel you? Feel you for
me?

Otti. Well then, I love you better now
than ever,

And best (look at me while I speak to
you) — ³⁷⁰

Best for the crime; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of
ours

May not now be looked over: look it down!
Great? let it be great; but the joys it
brought,

Pay they or no its price? Come: they or
it!

Speak not! The past, would you give up
the past ³⁷⁴

Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you?
The garden's silence: even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula chalice set a-swing.
Who stammered — "Yes, I love you?"

Seb. And I drew
Back; put far back your face with both my
hands

Lest you should grow too full of me — your
face

So seemed athirst for my whole soul and
body!

Otti. And when I ventured to receive
you here, ³⁸⁰

Made you steal hither in the mornings —

Seb. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house
here,

Till the red fire on its glazed windows
spread

To a yellow haze?

Otti. Ah — my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.

Seb. You would always laugh
At my wet boots: I had to stride through
grass

Over my ankles.

Otti. Then our crowning night!

Seb. The July night?

Otti. The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed
with heat,

Its black-blue canopy suffered descend ⁴⁰⁰
Close on us both, to weigh down each to
each,

And smother up all life except our life.

So lay we till the storm came.

Seb. How it came!

Otti. Buried in woods we lay, you recol-
lect;

Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned through the pine-tree roof, here
burned and there,
As if God's messenger through the close
wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a
venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me: then
broke 410

The thunder like a whole sea overhead —

Seb. Yes!

Otti. — While I stretched myself upon
you, hands

To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth,
and shook

All my locks loose, and covered you with
them —

You, Sebald, the same you!

Seb. Slower, Ottima!

Otti. And as we lay —

Seb. Less vehemently! Love me!
Forgive me! Take not words, mere words
to heart!

Your breath is worse than wine. Breathe
slow, speak slow!

Do not lean on me!

Otti. Sebald, as we lay,
Rising and falling only with our pants, 420
Who said, "Let death come now! 'T is
right to die!

Right to be punished! Naught completes
such bliss

But woe!" Who said that?

Seb. How did we ever rise?
Was 't that we slept? Why did it end?

Otti. I felt you
Taper into a point the ruffled ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid
lips.

My hair is fallen now: knot it again!

Seb. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now
and now!

This way? Will you forgive me — be
once more 430

My great queen?

Otti. Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbi-
tress,

Magnificent in sin. Say that!

Seb. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbi-
tress,

Magnificent . . .

[From without is heard the voice of PIPPA singing —

*The year 's at the spring
And the day 's at the morn;
Morning 's at seven;
The hillside 's dew-pearled;
The lark 's on the wing;
The snail 's on the thorn: 440
God 's in his heaven —
All 's right with the world!*

[PIPPA passes.

Seb. God 's in his heaven! Do you hear
that? Who spoke?

You, you spoke!

Otti. Oh — that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step: we give
them

But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills — their
inside?

There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . .

Sh! 449

She does not hear: call you out louder!

Seb. Leave me!
Go, get your clothes on — dress those
shoulders!

Otti. Sebald?

Seb. Wipe off that paint! I hate you.

Otti. Miserable!

Seb. My God, and she is emptied of it
now!

Ontright now! — how miraculously gone
All of the grace — had she not strange
grace once?

Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it
likes,

No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places: and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it, 460
Drops, a dead web!

Otti. Speak to me — not of me!

Seb. — That round great full-orbed face,
where not an angle

Broke the delicious indolence — all broken!

Otti. To me — not of me! Ungrateful,
perjured cheat!

A coward too: but ingrate 's worse than all!
Beggar — my slave — a fawning, cringing
lie!

Leave me! Betray me! I can see your drift!
A lie that walks and eats and drinks!

Seb. My God!
Those morbid olive faultless shoulder-
blades —

I should have known there was no blood
beneath ! 470

Otti. You hate me then ? You hate me
then ?

Seb. To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior — guilt from its excess superior
To innocence ! That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick ! I see what I have done,
Entirely now ! Oh I am proud to feel 480
Such torments — let the world take credit
thence —

I, having done my deed, pay too its price !
I hate, hate — curse you ! God's in his
heaven !

Otti. — Me !

Me ! no, no, Sebald, not yourself — kill me !
Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me
— then

Yourself — then — presently — first hear
me speak !

I always meant to kill myself — wait, you !
Lean on my breast — not as a breast ; don't
love me

The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald ! There, there, both deaths
presently ! 490

Seb. My brain is drowned now — quite
drowned : all I feel

Is . . . is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit :
There they go — whirls from a black fiery
sea !

Otti. Not me — to him, O God, be merciful !

Pirra's Chamber again. She enters it.

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
While winter away ; 500
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-
worm, I pray,
How fare they ?

Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze !
" Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze " —
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for to-morrow so soon put away !
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,

How fare they ?

No bidding me then to . . . what did Zanze
say ? 510

" Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small
feet shoes

More like " . . . (what said she ?) — "and
less like canoes ! "

How pert that girl was ! — would I be
those pert

Impudent staring women ! It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest
upon me :

No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to in-
spect

Our silk-mills — none with blue eyes and
thick rings

Of raw-silk-colored hair, at all events. 520

Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year
brings !

I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year !
Blumph . . . something ! I had caught the
uncouth name

But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us — bound to spoil such idle chatter
As ours : it were indeed a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The . . . ah but — ah but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right 530

To carry that exalted air ;
Best people are not angels quite :
While — not the worst of people's doings
scare

The devil ; so there's that proud look to
spare !

Which is mere counsel to myself, mind !
for

I have just been the holy Monsignor :
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi ! — how that Luigi
started 540

Out of the turret — doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he passed just now in a traveller's
trim,

And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled
As if they had lost a prev in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I ? — tired of fooling.

Day for folly, night for schooling ! 550
 New year's day is over and spent,
 Ill or well, I must be content.

Even my lily's asleep, I vow:
 Wake up — here's a friend I've plucked
 you !

Call this flower a heart's-ease now !
 Something rare, let me instruct you,
 Is this, with petals triply swollen,
 Three times spotted, thrice the pollen;
 While the leaves and parts that witness
 Old proportions and their fitness, 560
 Here remain unchanged, unmoved now;
 Call this pampered thing improved now !
 Suppose there's a king of the flowers
 And a girl-show held in his bowers —
 "Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
 Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
 I have made her gorge polenta
 Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
 As her . . . name there's no pronouncing !
 See this heightened color too, 570
 For she swilled Breganze wine
 Till her nose turned deep carmine;
 'T was but white when wild she grew.
 And only by this Zanze's eyes
 Of which we could not change the size,
 The magnitude of all achieved
 Otherwise, may be perceived."

Oh what a drear dark close to my poor
 day !

How could that red sun drop in that black
 cloud ? 579

Ah Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
 Dispensed with, never more to be allowed !
 Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.
 Oh lark, be day's apostle
 To mavis, merle and throistle,
 Bid them their betters jostle
 From day and its delights !
 But at night, brother owlet, over the
 woods,

Toll the world to thy chantry;
 Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
 Full complines with gallantry: 590
 Then, owls and bats,
 Cows and twats,
 Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
 Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry !

[After she has begun to undress herself.]
 Now, one thing I should like to really
 know:

How near I ever might approach all these
 I only fancied being, this long day:

— Approach, I mean, so as to touch them,
 so

As to . . . in some way . . . move them
 — if you please,

Do good or evil to them some slight way.
 For instance, if I wind 601

Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind
 [Sitting on the bedside.]

And border Ottima's cloak's hem.
 Ah me, and my important part with them,
 This morning's hymn half promised when I
 rose !

True in some sense or other, I suppose.
 [As she lies down.]

God bless me ! I can pray no more to-
 night.

No doubt, some way or other, hymns say
 right.

*All service ranks the same with God —
 With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
 Are we ; there is no last nor first. 611*
 [She sleeps.]

CAVALIER TUNES

[Publ. 1842]

I. MARCHING ALONG

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,
 Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
 And see the rogues flourish and honest folk
 droop,

Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
 Great hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles ! Pym and such
 carles

To the Devil that prompts 'em their trea-
 sonous parles !

Cavaliers, up ! Lips from the cup,
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
 Till you're —

CHO. — Marching along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, sing-
 ing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell.
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry
 as well !

England, good cheer ! Rupert is near !
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

CHO. — Marching along, fifty-score
strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, sing-
ing this song ?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his
snarls

To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent
carles!

Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the
fight,

CHO. — March we along, fifty-score
strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, sing-
ing this song !

II. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who 'll do him right now ?

King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now ?

Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since ?

Who raised me the house that sank once ?

Who helped me to gold I spent since ?

Who foud me in wine you drank once ?

CHO. — King Charles, and who 'll do him
right now ?

King Charles, and who 's ripe for
fight now ?

Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's de-
spite now,

King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,

By the old fool's side that begot him ?

For whom did he cheer and laugh else,

While Noll's damned troopers shot him ?

CHO. — King Charles, and who 'll do him
right now ?

King Charles, and who 's ripe for
fight now ?

Give a rouse: here's, in hell's de-
spite now,

King Charles!

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Rescue my castle before the hot day

Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and
pray

"God's luck to gallants that strike up the
lay —

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundhead's
array:

Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my
fay,

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest
and gay,

Laughs when you talk of surrendering.

"Nay!

I've better counsellors; what counsel
they?

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

THE LOST LEADER

[Publ. 1842]

Browning was beset with questions by people asking if he referred to Wordsworth in this poem. He answered the question more than once, as an artist would: the following letter to Rev. A. B. Grosart, the editor of Wordsworth's *Poems*, sufficiently states his position.

19 Warwick-Crescent, W., Feb. 24, 75.

DEAR MR. GROSART, — I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered it. I can't remember how many times; there is no sort of objection to one more assurance or rather confession, on my part, that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about "handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon." These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet, whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But just as in the tapestry on my wall I can recognize figures which have struck out a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy, so, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the "very effluvia" of such a moral and intellectual superiority.

Faithfully yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,

Just for a ribbon to stick in his
coat —

Found the one gift of which fortune bereft
us,

Lost all the others she lets us devote;

They, with the gold to give, doled him out
silver,
So much was theirs who so little al-
lowed:

How all our copper had gone for his ser-
vice!

Rags — were they purple, his heart had
been proud!

We that had loved him so, followed him,
honored him,

Lived in his mild and magnificent
eye,

Learned his great language, caught his
clear accents,

Made him our pattern to live and to
die!

Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for
us,

Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they
watch from their graves!

He alone breaks from the van and the free-
men,

— He alone sinks to the rear and the
slaves!

We shall march prospering, — not through
his presence;

Songs may inspire us, — not from his
lyre;

Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his
quiescence,

Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade
aspire:

Blot out his name, then, record one lost
soul more,

One task more declined, one more foot-
path untrod,

One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for
angels,

One wrong more to man, one more insult
to God!

Life's night begins: let him never come
back to us!

There would be doubt, hesitation and
pain,

Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of
twilight,

Never glad confident morning again!

Best fight on well, for we taught him —
strike gallantly,

Menace our heart ere we master his
own;

Then let him receive the new knowledge
and wait us,

Pardoned in heaven, the first by the
throne!

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE
GOOD NEWS FROM
GHENT TO AIX"

[Publ. 1842]

Browning wrote to an American inquirer about this poem: "There is no sort of historical foundation for the poem about 'Good News from Ghent.' I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel, off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home. It was written in pencil on the fly-leaf of Bartoli's *Simboli*, I remember."

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Direk galloped, we galloped all
three;

"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-
bolts undrew;

"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping
through;

Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to
rest,

And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great
pace

Neck by neck, stride by stride, never
changing our place;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths
tight,

Then shortened each stirrup, and set the
pique right,

Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker
the bit,

Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'T was moonset at starting; but while we
drew near

Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight
dawned clear;

At Boom, a great yellow star came out to
see;

At Duffeld, 't was morning as plain as
could be;

And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard
the half-chime,

So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is
time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black
every one,

To stare through the mist at us galloping
 And ^{past,} saw my stout galloper Roland at
 last,
 With resolute shoulders, each butting
 away
 The haze, as some bluff river headland its
 spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp
 ear bent back
 For my voice, and the other pricked out on
 his track;
 And one eye's black intelligence, — ever
 that glance
 O'er its white edge at me, his own master,
 askance!
 And the thick heavy spume-flakes which
 aye and anon
 His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping
 on. 30

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris,
 "Stay spur!
 Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not
 in her,
 We'll remember at Aix" — for one heard
 the quick wheeze
 Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and
 staggering knees,
 And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the
 flank,
 As down on her haunches she shuddered
 and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
 Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in
 the sky;
 The broad sun above laughed a pitiless
 laugh,
 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright
 stubble like chaff; 40
 Till over by Dalhem a dome-spiere sprang
 white,
 And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in
 sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" — and all in a
 moment his roan
 Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a
 stone;
 And there was my Roland to bear the
 whole weight
 Of the news which alone could save Aix
 from her fate,

With his nostrils like pits full of blood to
 the brim,
 And with circles of red for his eye-sockets'
 rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster
 let fall,
 Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt
 and all,
 Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his
 ear,
 Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse
 without peer;
 Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any
 noise, bad or good,
 Till at length into Aix Roland galloped
 and stood.

And all I remember is — friends flocking
 round
 As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on
 the ground;
 And no voice but was praising this Roland
 of mine,
 As I poured down his throat our last meas-
 ure of wine,
 Which (the burghesses voted by common
 consent)
 Was no more than his due who brought
 good news from Ghent. 50

CRISTINA

[Publ. 1842]

SHE should never have looked at me
 If she meant I should not love her!
 There are plenty . . . men, you call such,
 I suppose . . . she may discover
 All her soul to, if she pleases,
 And yet leave much as she found them:
 But I'm not so, and she knew it
 When she fixed me, glancing round them

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
 But I can't tell (there's my weakness).
 What her look said! — no vile cant, sure.
 About "need to strew the bleakness
 Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
 That the sea feels" — no "strange yearn-
 ing
 That such souls have, most to lavish
 Where there's chance of least return-
 ing."

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
 But not quite so sunk that moments,
 Sure though seldom, are denied us,
 When the spirit's true endowments 20
 Stand out plainly from its false ones,
 And apprise it if pursuing
 Or the right way or the wrong way,
 To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights,
 There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
 Whereby piled-up honors perish,
 Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
 While just this or that poor impulse,
 Which for once had played unstified, 30
 Seems the sole work of a lifetime,
 That away the rest have trifled.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
 As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
 Ages past the soul existed,
 Here an age 'tis resting merely,
 And hence fleets again for ages,
 While the true end, sole and single,
 It stops here for is, this love-way,
 With some other soul to mingle? 40

Else it loses what it lived for,
 And eternally must lose it;
 Better ends may be in prospect,
 Deeper blisses (if you choose it),
 But this life's end and this love-bliss
 Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
 This she felt as, looking at me,
 Mine and her souls rushed together?

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
 'The world's honors, in derision, 50
 Trampled out the light forever:
 Never fear but there's provision
 Of the devil's to quench knowledge
 Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
 — Making those who catch God's secret
 Just so much more prize their capture!

Such am I: the secret's mine now!
 She has lost me, I have gained her;
 Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,
 I shall pass my life's remainder. 60
 Life will just hold out the proving
 Both our powers, alone and blended:
 And then, come the next life quickly!
 This world's use will have been ended.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

[Publ. 1842]

WHERE the quiet-colored end of evening
 smiles
 Miles and miles
 On the solitary pastures where our sheep
 Half-asleep
 Tinkle homeward through the twilight,
 stray or stop
 As they crop —
 Was the site once of a city great and gay,
 (So they say)
 Of our country's very capital, its prince
 Ages since 10
 Held his court in, gathered councils, wield-
 ing far
 Peace or war.

Now, — the country does not even boast a
 tree,
 As you see,
 To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
 From the hills
 Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
 Into one,)
 Where the domed and daring palace shot its
 spires
 Up like fires 20
 O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
 Bounding all,
 Made of marble, men might march on nor
 be pressed,
 Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
 Never was!
 Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'er-
 spreads
 And embeds
 Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
 Stock or stone — 30
 Where a multitude of men breathed joy
 and woe
 Long ago;
 Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread
 of shame
 Struck them tame;
 And that glory and that shame alike, the
 gold
 Bought and sold.

Now, — the single little turret that remains
 On the plains,

By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
 Overscored,
 While the patching houseleek's head of
 blossom winks
 Through the chinks —
 Marks the basement whence a tower in an-
 cient time
 Sprang sublime,
 And a burning ring, all round, the chariots
 traced
 As they raced,
 And the monarch and his minions and his
 dames
 Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored
 eve
 Smiles to leave
 To their folding, all our many-tinkling
 fleece
 In such peace,
 And the slopes and rills in undistinguished
 gray
 Melt away —
 That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
 Waits me there
 In the turret whence the charioteers caught
 soul
 For the goal,
 When the king looked, where she looks
 now, breathless, dumb
 Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
 Far and wide,
 All the mountains topped with temples, all
 the glades'
 Colonnades,
 All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts, — and
 then,
 All the men!
 When I do come, she will speak not, she
 will stand,
 Either hand
 On my shoulder, give her eyes the first em-
 brace
 Of my face,
 Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and
 speech
 Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
 South and North,
 And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
 As the sky,

Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full
 force —
 Gold, of course.
 Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that
 burns!
 Earth's returns
 For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin.
 Shut them in,
 With their triumphs and their glories and
 the rest!
 Love is best.

UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN
 PERSON OF QUALITY)

[Publ. 1842]

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough
 and to spare,
 The house for me, no doubt, were a house
 in the city-square;
 Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at
 the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something
 to hear, at least!
 There, the whole day long, one's life is a
 perfect feast;
 While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it,
 no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the
 horn of a bull
 Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the
 creature's skull,
 Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a
 leaf to pull!
 — I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if
 the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city — the square with
 the houses! Why?
 They are stone-faced, white as a card,
 there's something to take the eye!
 Houses in four straight lines, not a single
 front awry;
 You watch who crosses and gossips, who
 saunters, who hurries by;
 Green blinds, as a matter of course, to
 draw when the sun gets high;
 And the shops with fanciful signs which
 are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over
in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have
withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before,
where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the
faint gray olive-trees. 20

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've
summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few
strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce
risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out
its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the
children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a
fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the
shine such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that
prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her coach — fifty
gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds
round her waist in a sort of sash. 30

All the year long at the villa, nothing to
see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's
lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix
i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks
of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stun-
ning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine
round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons, — I spare you the
months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the
blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the dili-
gence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs
you never a pin. 40
By and by there's the travelling doctor
gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the
market beneath.

At the post-office such a scene-picture —
the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three
liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most
fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion,
some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the
Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint
Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhym-
ing,) "the skirts of Saint Paul has
reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lect-
ures more unctuous than ever he
preached." 50
Noon strikes, — here sweeps the procession!
our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and
seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-
tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the
greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear! fowls,
wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and
what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa
for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still
— ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the
monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts,
a-holding the yellow candles; 60
One, he carries a flag up straight, and au-
other a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear,
for the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-
tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no
such pleasure in life!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,

That the lowest boughs and the brush-
wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard
bough
In England — now !

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the
swallows !
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in
the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's
edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song
twice over,
Lest you should think he never could re-
capture

The first fine careless rapture !
And though the fields look rough with
hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-
flower !

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the
Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking
into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face
Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned
Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me:
how can I help England ?" — say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to
God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent
over Africa.

SAUL

The first nine sections of this poem were
printed under the same title in 1845. The
poem as enlarged was published in 1855.

I

SAID Abner, "At last thou art come ! Ere
I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well !" Then I
wished it, and did kiss his cheek.

And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for
thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor
until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the
King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright,
with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a
space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants,
of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have
ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch
sinks back upon life.

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved !
God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies
still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-
strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert !"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and
rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder.
The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and
under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-
patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I
groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open.
Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered
and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant !"
And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the black-
ness: but soon I descried
A something more black than the black-
ness — the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and
slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and black-
est of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the
tent-roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both
 arms stretched out wide
 On the great cross-support in the centre,
 that goes to each side;
 He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there
 as, caught in his pangs 30
 And waiting his change, the king-serpent
 all heavily hangs,
 Far away from his kind, in the pine, till
 deliverance come
 With the spring-time, — so agonized Saul,
 drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp, — took off the lilies
 we twine round its chords
 Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noon-
 tide — those sunbeams like swords!
 And I first played the tune all our sheep
 know, as, one after one,
 So docile they come to the pen-door till
 folding be done.
 They are white and untorn by the bushes,
 for lo, they have fed
 Where the long grasses stifle the water
 within the stream's bed;
 And now one after one seeks its lodging,
 as star follows star 40
 Into eve and the blue far above us, — so
 blue and so far!

VI

— Then the tune for which quails on the
 corn-land will each leave his mate
 To fly after the player; then, what makes
 the crickets elate
 Till for boldness they fight one another;
 and then, what has weight
 To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside
 his sand house —
 There are none such as he for a wonder,
 half bird and half mouse!
 God made all the creatures and gave them
 our love and our fear,
 To give sign, we and they are his children,
 one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers,
 their wine-song, when hand 49
 Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good
 friendship, and great hearts expand
 And grow one in the sense of this world's
 life. — And then, the last song

When the dead man is praised on his jour-
 ney — “Bear, bear him along,
 With his few faults shut up like dead
 flowerets! Are balm seeds not
 here
 To console us? The land has none left
 such as he on the bier.
 Oh, would we might keep thee, my broth-
 er!” — And then, the glad chaunt
 Of the marriage, — first go the young
 maidens, next, she whom we vaunt
 As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.
 — And then, the great march
 Wherein man runs to man to assist him
 and buttress an arch
 Naught can break; who shall harm them,
 our friends? Then, the chorus in-
 toned
 As the Levites go up to the altar in glory
 enthroned. 60
 But I stopped here: for here in the dark-
 ness Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such si-
 lence, and listened apart;
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shud-
 dered: and sparkles gan dart
 From the jewels that woke in his turban, at
 once with a start,
 All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies
 courageous at heart.
 So the head: but the body still moved not,
 still hung there erect.
 And I bent once again to my playing, pur-
 sued it unchecked,
 As I sang:—

IX

“Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No
 spirit feels waste,
 Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor
 sinew unbraced. 70
 Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping
 from rock up to rock,
 The strong rending of boughs from the fir-
 tree, the cool silver shock
 Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the
 hunt of the bear,
 And the sultriness showing the lion is
 couched in his lair.
 And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over
 with gold dust divine,
 And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher,
 the full draught of wine,

And the sleep in the dried river-channel
 where bulrushes tell
 That the water was wont to go warbling so
 softly and well.
 How good is man's life, the mere living!
 how fit to employ
 All the heart and the soul and the senses
 forever in joy!
 Hast thou loved the white locks of thy
 father, whose sword thou didst
 guard
 When he trusted thee forth with the
 armies, for glorious reward?
 Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother,
 held up as men sung
 The low song of the nearly-departed, and
 hear her faint tongue
 Joining in while it could to the witness,
 'Let one more attest,
 I have lived, seen God's hand through a
 lifetime, and all was for best'?
 Then they sung through their tears in
 strong triumph, not much, but the
 rest.
 And thy brothers, the help and the contest,
 the working whence grew
 Such result as, from seething grape-bundles,
 the spirit strained true:
 And the friends of thy boyhood — that
 boyhood of wonder and hope,
 Present promise and wealth of the future
 beyond the eye's scope, —
 Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a
 people is thine;
 And all gifts, which the world offers singly,
 on one head combine!
 On one head, all the beauty and strength,
 love and rage (like the three
 That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor
 and lets the gold go)
 High ambition and deeds which surpass it,
 fame crowning them, — all
 Brought to blaze on the head of one crea-
 ture — King Saul!"

x

And lo, with that leap of my spirit, — heart,
 hand, harp and voice,
 Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow,
 each bidding rejoice
 Saul's fame in the light it was made for —
 as when, dare I say,
 The Lord's army, in rapture of service,
 strains through its array,

And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot —
 "Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
 And waited the thing that should follow.
 Then Saul, who hung propped
 By the tent's cross-support in the centre,
 was struck by his name.
 Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy san-
 mons goes right to the aim,
 And some mountain, the last to withstand
 her, that held (he alone,
 While the vale laughed in freedom and
 flowers) on a broad bust of stone
 A year's snow bound about for a breast-
 plate, — leaves grasp of the sheet?
 Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunder-
 ously down to his feet,
 And there fronts you, stark, black, but
 alive yet, your mountain of old,
 With his rents, the successive bequeathings
 of ages untold —
 Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles,
 each furrow and scar
 Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the
 tempest — all hail, there they
 are!
 — Now again to be softened with verdure,
 again hold the nest
 Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young
 to the green on his crest
 For their food in the ardors of summer. One
 long shudder thrilled
 All the tent till the very air tingled, then
 sank and was stilled
 At the King's self left standing before me,
 released and aware.
 What was gone, what remained? All to
 traverse 'twixt hope and despair,
 Death was past, life not come: so he waited.
 Awhile his right hand
 Held the brow, helped the eyes left too
 vacant forthwith to remand
 To their place what new objects should es-
 ter: 't was Saul as before.
 I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes,
 nor was hurt any more
 Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye
 watch from the shore,
 At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean — a
 sun's slow decline
 Over hills which, resolved in stern silence,
 o'erlap and entwine
 Base with base to knit strength more in-
 tensely: so, arm folded arm
 O'er the chest whose slow heavings sub-
 sided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
 (For awhile there was trouble within me,) what next should I urge
 To sustain him where song had restored him? — Song filled to the verge.¹³⁰
 His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
 Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields,
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
 And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
 He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not: he lets me praise life,
 Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
 Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
 Fed in silence — above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
 And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
 'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky:¹⁴⁰
 And I laughed — "Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
 Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,
 Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
 Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
 Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
 And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old trains
 Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
 Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus —

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
 I began — "thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
 From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:¹⁵⁰
 In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.

Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,
 — how its stem trembled first
 Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
 The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these too, in turn,
 Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect: yet more was to learn,
 E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
 When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
 Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
 Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
 Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.¹⁶⁰
 Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
 By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
 More indeed, than at first when unconscious, the life of a boy.
 Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
 Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
 Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
 Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
 The results of his past summer-prime, — so, each ray of thy will,
 Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
 Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth.¹⁷⁰
 A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
 With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
 But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:
 As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
 So with man — so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
 No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
 Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
 Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb — bid arise

A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King
slumbers: whose fame would ye
know? ¹⁸⁰

Up above see the rock's naked face, where
the record shall go

In great characters cut by the scribe, —
Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the
populace chid, —

For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised
there! Which fault to amend,

In the grove with his kind grows the cedar,
whereon they shall spend

(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their
praise, and record

With the gold of the graver, Saul's story, —
the statesman's great word

Side by side with the poet's sweet comment.
The river's a-wave

With smooth paper-reads grazing each other
when prophet-winds rave:

So the pen gives unborn generations their
due and their part ¹⁹⁰

In thy being! Then, first of the mighty,
thank God that thou art!"

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O
Thou who didst grant me that
day,

And before it not seldom hast granted thy
help to essay,

Carry on and complete an adventure, — my
shield and my sword

In that act where my soul was thy servant,
thy word was my word, —

Still be with me, who then at the summit
of human endeavor

And scaling the highest, man's thought
could, gazed hopeless as ever

On the new stretch of heaven above me —
till, mighty to save,

Just one lift of thy hand cleared that dis-
tance — God's throne from man's
grave!

Let me tell out my tale to its ending — my
voice to my heart ²⁰⁰

Which can scarce dare believe in what mar-
vels last night I took part,

As this morning I gather the fragments,
alone with my sheep,

And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish
like sleep!

For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while
Hebron upheaves

The dawn struggling with night on his
shoulder, and Kidron retrieves

Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV

I say then, — my song

While I sang thus, assuring the monarch,
and ever more strong

Made a proffer of good to console him — he
slowly resumed

His old motions and habitudes kingly. The
right hand replumed

His black locks to their wonted composure,
adjusted the swathes ²¹⁰

Of his turban, and see — the huge sweat that
his countenance bathes,

He wipes off with the robe; and he girds
now his loins as of yore,

And feels slow for the armlets of price
with the clasp set before.

He is Saul, ye remember in glory, — ere
error had bent

The broad brow from the daily com-
munion; and still, though much
spent

Be the life and the bearing that front you,
the same, God did choose,

To receive what a man may waste, de-
crate, never quite lose.

So sank he along by the tent-prop till
stayed by the pile

Of his armor and war-cloak and garments,
he leaned there awhile,

And sat out my singing, — one arm round
the tent-prop, to raise ²²⁰

His bent head, and the other hung slack —
till I touched on the praise

I foresaw from all men in all time, to the
man patient there;

And thus ended, the harp falling forward.
Then first I was 'ware

That he sat, as I say; with my head just
above his vast knees

Which were thrust out on each side around
me, like oak roots which please

To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I
looked up to know

If the best I could do had brought solace:
he spoke not, but slow

Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he
laid it with care

Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on
my brow: through my hair

The large fingers were pushed, and he
bent back my head, with kind
power — ²³⁰
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as
men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes
that scrutinized mine —
And oh, all my heart how it loved him!
but where was the sign?
I yearned — "Could I help thee, my father,
inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both
the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as
good, ages hence,
As this moment, — had love but the war-
rant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp
more — no song more! outbroke —

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation:
I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose,
received in my brain ²⁴⁰
And pronounced on the rest of his hand-
work — returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke
as I saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work —
all's love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me.
Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where
a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels
at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how
blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image
success?
I but open my eyes, — and perfection, no
more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God ²⁵⁰
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the
soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I
ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bend-
ing upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect
to God's all-complete,

As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb
to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience,
this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province,
some gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard
to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance, (I
laugh as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it,
wot ye, I worst ²⁶⁰
E'en the Giver in one gift. — Behold, I
could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man
may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I
abstain for love's sake.
— What, my soul? see thus far and no
farther? when doors great and
small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch,
should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust
in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's
ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete
with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator, —
the end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do
all for this man, ²⁷⁰
And dare doubt he alone shall not help
him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the
bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the
marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with?
to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for
insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my
warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on,
and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him,
maintain at the height
This perfection, — succeed with life's day-
spring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch
Saul the mistake, ²⁸⁰
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now, —
and bid him awake

From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
 Clear and safe in new light and new life, —
 a new harmony yet
 To be run, and continued, and ended — who
 knows? — or endure!
 The man taught enough by life's dream, of
 the rest to make sure;
 By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning
 intensified bliss,
 And the next world's reward and repose, by
 the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest,
 'tis I who receive:
 In the first is the last, in thy will is my
 power to believe.
 All's one gift: thou canst grant it more-
 over, as prompt to my prayer 290
 As I breathe out this breath, as I open these
 arms to the air.
 From thy will stream the worlds, life and
 nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
 I will? — the mere atoms despise me! Why
 am I not loth
 To look that, even that in the face too?
 Why is it I dare
 Think but lightly of such impuissance?
 What stops my despair?
 This; — 'tis not what man Does which
 exalts him, but what man Would
 do!
 See the King — I would help him but can-
 not, the wishes fall through.
 Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow,
 grow poor to enrich,
 To fill up his life, starve my own out, I
 would — knowing which,
 I know that my service is perfect. Oh,
 speak through me now! 300
 Would I suffer for him that I love? So
 wouldst thou — so wilt thou!
 So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest,
 uttermost crown —
 And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave
 up nor down
 One spot for the creature to stand in! It is
 by no breath,
 Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation
 joins issue with death!
 As thy Love is discovered almighty, al-
 mighty be proved
 Thy power, that exists with and for it, of
 being Beloved!

He who did most, shall bear most; the
 strongest shall stand the most weak
 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry
 for! my flesh, that I seek
 In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O
 Saul, it shall be 310
 A Face like my face that receives thee; a
 Man like to me,
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a
 Hand like this hand
 Shall throw open the gates of new life to
 thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way
 home in the night.
 There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to
 left and to right,
 Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the
 alive, the aware:
 I repressed, I got through them as hardly,
 as strugglingly there,
 As a runner beset by the populace famished
 for news —
 Life or death. The whole earth was
 awakened, hell loosed with her
 crews;
 And the stars of night beat with emotion,
 and tinkled and shot 320
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowl-
 edge: but I fainted not,
 For the Hand still impelled me at once and
 supported, suppressed
 All the tumult, and queched it with quiet,
 and holy behest.
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the
 earth sank to rest.
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had
 withered from earth —
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in the
 day's tender birth;
 In the gathered intensity brought to the
 gray of the hills;
 In the shuddering forests' held breath; in
 the sudden wind-thrills;
 In the startled wild beasts that bore off,
 each with eye sidling still
 Though averted with wonder and dread:
 in the birds stiff and chill 330
 That rose heavily, as I approached them,
 made stupid with awe:
 E'en the serpent that slid away silent, — he
 felt the new law.
 The same stared in the white humid faces
 upturned by the flowers;

The same worked in the heart of the cedar
 and moved the vine-bowers:
 And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
 persistent and low,
 With their obstinate, all but hushed voices
 —“E'en so, it is so!”

MY STAR

[Publ. 1872]

ALL that I know
 Of a certain star
 Is, it can throw
 (Like the angled spar)
 Now a dart of red,
 Now a dart of blue;
 Till my friends have said
 They would fain see, too,
 My star that dartles the red and the blue!
 Then it stops like a bird; like a flower,
 hangs furled: 10
 They must solace themselves with the
 Saturn above it.
 What matter to me if their star is a world?
 Mine has opened its soul to me; there-
 fore I love it.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH
CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
 A mile or so away,
 On a little mound, Napoleon
 Stood on our storming-day;
 With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
 Legs wide, arms locked behind,
 As if to balance the prone brow
 Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused “My plans
 That soar, to earth may fall, 10
 Let once my army-leader Lannes
 Waver at yonder wall,” —
 Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
 A rider, bound on bound
 Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
 Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
 And held himself erect
 By just his horse's mane, a boy:
 You hardly could suspect — 20

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
 Scarce any blood came through)
 You looked twice ere you saw his breast
 Was all but shot in two.

“Well,” cried he, “Emperor, by God's
 grace
 We've got you Ratisbon!
 The Marshal's in the market-place,
 And you'll be there anon
 To see your flag-bird flap his vans
 Where I, to heart's desire, 30
 Perched him!” The chief's eye flashed;
 his plans
 Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
 Softened itself, as sheathes
 A film the mother-eagle's eye
 When her bruised eaglet breathes;
 “You're wounded!” “Nay,” the soldier's
 pride
 Touched to the quick, he said:
 “I'm killed, Sir!” And his chief beside,
 Smiling the boy fell dead. 40

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

THAT's my last Duchess painted on the
 wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's
 hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I
 said
 “Frà Pandolf” by design, for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured counte-
 nance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts
 by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they
 durst, 11
 How such a glance came there; so, not the
 first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was
 not
 Her husband's presence only, called that
 spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps

FRÄ Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle
laps

Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:"
such stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause
enough

For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon
made glad,

Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went every-
where.

Sir, 't was all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white
mule

She rode with round the terrace—all and
each

Would draw from her alike the approving
speech,

Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—
good! but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she
ranked

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to
blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make
your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just
this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made ex-
cuse,

—E'en then would be some stooping; and
I choose

Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no
doubt,

Whene'er I passed her; but who passed
without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave
commands;

Then all smiles stopped together. There
she stands

As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll
meet

The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munifi-
cence

Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,
though,

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze
for me!

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

This poem was written after Browning's visit
to Italy in 1844.

THAT second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, bounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have
plucked

The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they
love:

—How long it seems since Charles was
lost!

Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start.

Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
 One instant rapidly glanced round,
 And saw me beckon from the ground; 40
 A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
 She picked my glove up while she stripped
 A branch off, then rejoined the rest
 With that; my glove lay in her breast.
 Then I drew breath: they disappeared:
 It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
 Exactly where my glove was thrown.
 Meanwhile came many thoughts on me
 Tested the hopes of Italy; 50
 Had devised a certain tale
 Which, when 't was told her, could not fail
 Persuade a peasant of its truth;
 Meant to call a freak of youth
 This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
 And no temptation to betray.
 But when I saw that woman's face,
 Its calm simplicity of grace,
 Our Italy's own attitude
 In which she walked thus far, and stood, 60
 Panting each naked foot so firm,
 To crush the snake and spare the worm —
 At first sight of her eyes, I said,
 I am that man upon whose head
 They fix the price, because I hate
 The Austrians over us: the State
 Will give you gold — oh, gold so much! —
 If you betray me to their clutch,
 And be your death, for aught I know,
 If once they find you saved their foe. 70
 Now, you must bring me food and drink,
 And also paper, pen and ink,
 And carry safe what I shall write
 To Padua, which you 'll reach at night
 Before the duomo shuts; go in,
 And wait till Tenebræ begin;
 Walk to the third confessional,
 Between the pillar and the wall,
 And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
 Say it a second time, then cease; 80
 And if the voice inside returns,
 From *Christ and Freedom; what concerns*
the cause of Peace? — for answer, slip
 A letter where you placed your lip;
 Then come back happy we have done
 Your mother service — I, the son,
 And you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
 In the same place, with the same eyes:
 Was no surer of sunrise 90

Than of her coming. We conferred
 Of her own prospects, and I heard
 She had a lover — stout and tall,
 She said — then let her eyelids fall,
 "He could do much" — as if some doubt
 Entered her heart, — then, passing out,
 "She could not speak for others, who
 Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"
 And so she brought me drink and food.
 After four days, the scouts pursued 100
 Another path; at last arrived
 The help my Paduan friends contrived
 To furnish me: she brought the news.
 For the first time I could not choose
 But kiss her hand, and lay my own
 Upon her head — "This faith was shown
 To Italy, our mother; she
 Uses my hand and blesses thee."
 She followed down to the sea-shore;
 I left and never saw her more. 110

How very long since I have thought
 Concerning — much less wished for — aught
 Beside the good of Italy,
 For which I live and mean to die!
 I never was in love; and since
 Charles proved false, what shall now con-
 vince

My inmost heart I have a friend?
 However, if I pleased to spend
 Real wishes on myself — say, three —
 I know at least what one should be. 120
 I would grasp Metternich until
 I felt his red wet throat distil
 In blood through these two hands. And
 next

— Nor much for that am I perplexed —
 Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
 Should die slow of a broken heart
 Under his new employers. Last
 — Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
 Do I grow old and out of strength.
 If I resolved to seek at length 130
 My father's house again, how scared
 They all would look, and unprepared
 My brothers live in Austria's pay
 — Disowned me long ago, men say;
 And all my early mates who used
 To praise me so — perhaps induced
 More than one early step of mine —
 Are turning wise: while some opine
 "Freedom grows license," some suspect
 "Haste breeds delay," and recollect 140
 They always said, such premature
 Beginnings never could endure!

So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
 The land seems settling to its rest.
 I think then, I should wish to stand
 This evening in that dear, lost land,
 Over the sea the thousand miles,
 And know if yet that woman smiles
 With the calm smile; some little farm
 She lives in there, no doubt: what harm 150
 If I sat on the door-side bench,
 And, while her spindle made a trench
 Fantastically in the dust,
 Inquired of all her fortunes — just
 Her children's ages and their names,
 And what may be the husband's aims
 For each of them. I'd talk this out,
 And sit there, for an hour about,
 Then kiss her hand once more, and lay 160
 Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing — how
 It steals the time! To business now.

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I SAID — Then, dearest, since 't is so,
 Since now at length my fate I know,
 Since nothing all my love avails,
 Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
 Since this was written and needs must
 be —

My whole heart rises up to bless
 Your name in pride and thankfulness!
 Take back the hope you gave, — I claim
 Only a memory of the same,
 — And this beside, if you will not blame, 10
 Your leave for one more last ride with
 me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs

When pity would be softening through,
 Fixed me a breathing-while or two

With life or death in the balance: right!
 The blood replenished me again;
 My last thought was at least not vain:
 I and my mistress, side by side
 Shall be together, breathe and ride, 20
 So, one day more am I deified.

Who knows but the world may end to-
 night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
 All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed

By many benedictions — sun's
 And moon's and evening-star's at once —
 And so, you, looking and loving best,
 Conscious grew, your passion drew
 Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
 Down on you, near and yet more near,
 Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!
 Thus leant she and lingered — joy and fear
 Thus lay she a moment on my breast

Then we began to ride. My soul
 Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped and
 Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
 Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry?
 Had I said that, had I done this,
 So might I gain, so might I miss.
 Might she have loved me? just as well
 She might have hated, who can tell!
 Where had I been now if the worst befel?
 And here we are riding, she and I

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
 Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
 We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
 Saw other regions, cities new,

As the world rushed by on either side.
 I thought, — All labor, yet no less
 Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
 Look at the end of work, contrast
 The petty done, the undone vast,
 This present of theirs with the hope:
 past!

I hoped she would love me; here we ride

What hand and brain went ever paired?
 What heart alike conceived and dared?
 What act proved all its thought had been?
 What will but felt the fleshly screen?

We ride and I see her bosom heave.
 There's many a crown for who can react
 Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
 The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
 A soldier's doing! what atones?
 They scratch his name on the Abbey-stone
 My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
 Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
 What we felt only; you expressed
 You hold things beautiful the best,
 And place them in rhyme so, side by side.
 'T is something, nay 't is much: but then
 Have you yourself what's best for men?
 Are you — poor, sick, old ere your time —

fearer one whit your own sublime
 Than we who never have turned a rhyme ?
 Sing, riding's a joy ! For me, I ride.

and you, great sculptor — so, you gave
 A score of years to Art, her slave,
 And that's your Venus, whence we turn so
 To yonder girl that fords the burn !

You acquiesce, and shall I repine ?
 What, man of music, you grown gray
 With notes and nothing else to say,
 Is this your sole praise from a friend,
 Greatly his opera's strains intend,
 But in music we know how fashions end !"
 I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us ? Had fate
 Proposed bliss here should sublimate 90
 My being — had I signed the bond —
 Till one must lead some life beyond,
 Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
 His foot once planted on the goal,
 His glory-garland round my soul,
 Could I desert such ? Try and test !
 Sink back shuddering from the quest.
 Art being so good, would heaven seem
 Best ?
 Now, heaven and she are beyond this
 Ride.

And yet — she has not spoke so long ! 100
 That if heaven be that, fair and strong
 'Tis life's best, with our eyes upturned
 'Tis her life's flower is first discerned,
 We, fixed so, ever should so abide ?
 That if we still ride on, we two,
 'Tis life forever old yet new,
 Changed not in kind but in degree,
 He instant made eternity, —
 And heaven just prove that I and she
 Ride, ride together, forever ride ? 110

PROTUS

Among these latter busts we count by
 scores,
 Half-emperors and quarter-emperors,
 Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-thonged
 vest,
 And low-browed Gorgon on the
 breast, —
 As loves a baby face, with violets there,
 Violets instead of laurel in the hair,
 As those were all the little locks could bear.

Now read here. "Protus ends a period
 Of empery beginning with a god; 9
 Born in the porphyry chamber at Byzant,
 Queens by his cradle, proud and ministrant:
 And if he quickened breath there, 't would
 like fire

Pantingly through the dim vast realm trans-
 pire.

A fame that he was missing spread afar:
 The world, from its four corners, rose in war,
 Till he was borne out on a balcony
 To pacify the world when it should see.
 The captains ranged before him, one, his
 hand

Made baby points at, gained the chief com-
 mand.

And day by day more beautiful he grew 20
 In shape, all said, in feature and in hue,
 While young Greek sculptors, gazing on
 the child,

Became with old Greek sculpture reconciled.
 Already sages labored to condense
 In easy tomes a life's experience:
 And artists took grave counsel to impart
 In one breath and one hand-sweep, all their
 art —

To make his graces prompt as blossoming
 Of plentifully-watered palms in spring:
 Since well beseems it, whoso mounts the
 throne, 30

For beauty, knowledge, strength, should
 stand alone,
 And mortals love the letters of his name."

—Stop! Have you turned two pages?
 Still the same

New reign, same date. The scribe goes on
 to say

How that same year, on such a month and
 day,

"John the Pannonian, groundedly believed
 A blacksmith's bastard, whose hard hand
 reprieved

The Empire from its fate the year before, —
 Came, had a mind to take the crown, and
 wore

The same for six years (during which the
 Huns 40

Kept off their fingers from us), till his sons
 Put something in his liquor" — and so forth.
 Then a new reign. Stay — "Take at its
 just worth"

(Subjoins an annotator) "what I give
 As hearsay. Some think, John let Protus
 live

And slip away. 'Tis said, he reached man's
age

At some blind northern court; made, first a
page,

Then tutor to the children; last, of use
About the hunting-stables. I deduce
He wrote the little tract 'On worming dogs,'
Whereof the name in sundry catalogues
Is extant yet. A Protus of the race
Is rumored to have died a monk in Thrace,—
And if the same, he reached senility."

Here 's John the Smith's rough-hammered
head. Great eye,

Gross jaw and gripped lips do what granite can
To give you the crown-grasper. What a
man!

THE STATUE AND THE BUST

This poem was published first in 1855 as an independent issue. A correspondent of an American paper once asked the following questions respecting this poem:—

"1. When, how, and where did it happen? Browning's divine vagueness lets one gather only that the lady's husband was a Riccardi. 2. Who was the lady? who the duke? 3. The magnificent house wherein Florence lodges her préfet is known to all Florentine ball-goers as the Palazzo Riccardi. It was bought by the Riccardi from the Medici in 1650. From none of its windows did the lady gaze at her more than royal lover. From what window, then, if from any? Are the statue and the bust still in their original positions?"

The letter fell into the hands of Mr. Thomas J. Wise, who sent it to Mr. Browning, and received the following answer.

Jan. 8, 1887.

DEAR MR. WISE,—I have seldom met with such a strange inability to understand what seems the plainest matter possible: "ball-goers" are probably not history-readers, but any guide-book would confirm what is sufficiently stated in the poem. I will append a note or two, however. 1. "This story the townsmen tell": "when, how, and where," constitutes the subject of the poem. 2. The lady was the wife of Riccardi; and the duke, Ferdinand, just as the poem says. 3. As it was built by, and inhabited by, the Medici till sold, long after, to the Riccardi, it was not from the duke's place, but a window in that of the Riccardi, that the lady gazed at her lover riding by. The statue is still in its place, looking at the window under which "now is the empty shrine." Can anything be clearer? My "vagueness" leaves what to be "gathered" when all these things are put down in black and white? Oh, "ball-goers"!

THERE's a palace in Florence, the world
knows well,

And a statue watches it from the square,
And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Agos ago, a lady there,
At the furthest window facing the East
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride in-
creased—

They felt by its beats her heart expand—
As one at each ear and both in a breath
Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand"

That selfsame instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back—"Who
she?"
—"A bride the Riccardi brings home to-
day."

Hair in heaps lay heavily
Over a pale brow spirit-pure—
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure—
And vainly sought to disemblem her eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure,

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man,—
The Duke grew straightway brave and wise

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes:
The past was a sleep, and her life began

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held that selfsame night
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
But the palace overshadows one,
Because of a crime, which may God requite)

To Florence and God the wrong was done
Through the first republic's murder there
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the
square)
Turned in the midst of his multitude
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued —

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor —
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of a thousand heard. 51

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir, 53
Through a certain window facing the East
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride —
"Your window and its world suffice,"
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied —

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise !

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well, 70
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim.
And I save my soul — but not to-morrow" —

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)
'My father tarries to bless my state:
I must keep it one day more for him.

'Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know; 80
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep:
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
'To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove) 90

And smiled, "Twas a very funeral,
Your lady will think, this feast of ours, —
A shame to efface, whate'er befall !

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
And try if Petraja, cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this morning's flowers ?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean !

"But, alas! my lady leaves the South; 100
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth:

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "Asage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:
Be our feast to-night as usual here !"

And then to himself — "Which night shall bring 109
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool —
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool —
For to-night the Envoy arrives from France
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss perchance.
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's countenance:

"For I ride — what should I do but ride ?
And passing her palace, if I list, 119
May glauce at its window — well betide!"

So said, so done: nor the lady missed
 One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
 Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit
 kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
 No morrow's sun should arise and set
 And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
 With still fresh cause to wait one day more
 Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore, ¹³⁰
 With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
 They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
 But not in despite of heaven and earth:
 The rose would blow when the storm passed
 by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's
 dearth

By store of fruits that supplant the rose:
 The world and its ways have a certain worth:

And to press a point while these oppose
 Were simple policy; better wait: ¹⁴⁰
 We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,
 Who daily may ride and pass and look
 Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she—she watched the square like a
 book

Holding one picture and only one,
 Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book was
 done,

And she turned from the picture at night to
 scheme

Of tearing it out for herself next sun. ¹⁵⁰

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by
 gleam

The glory dropped from their youth and love,
 And both perceived they had dreamed a
 dream;

Which hovered as dreams do, still above:
 But who can take a dream for a truth?
 Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day as the lady saw her youth
 Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
 Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so
 peaked, — ¹⁶⁰

And wondered who the woman was,
 Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—
 "Summon here," she suddenly said,
 "Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
 Who fashions the clay no love will change,
 And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
 Arrest the remains of young and fair, ¹⁷⁰
 And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there,
 Waiting as ever, mute the while,
 My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile
 Dreary days which the dead must spend
 Down in their darkness under the aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end?
 I did no more while my heart was warm
 Than does that image, my pale-faced
 friend.' ¹⁸⁰

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm.
 The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
 And the blood that blues the inside arm—

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
 The earthly gift to an end divine?
 A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
 With flowers and fruits which leaves ca-
 lace,

Was set where now is the empty shrine—

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,
 As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky,
 The passionate pale lady's face — ¹⁹⁰

Eying ever, with earnest eye
 And quick-turned neck at its breathless
 stretch,
 Some one who ever is passing by —)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest
wretch
in Florence, "Youth — my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them
fetch 198

Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes —
Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Let me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

In the very square I have crossed so
oft:

That men may admire, when future suns
shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

While the mouth and the brow stay brave
in bronze —

Admire and say, 'When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure once!' 210

And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! while these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know, 220
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss —
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world
to this.

I hear you reproach, "But delay was
best,

For their end was a crime." — Oh, a crime
will do

As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself 230
And prove its worth at a moment's view!

Must a game be played for the sake of
pelf?

Where a button goes, 't were an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham:
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table's a hat, and your prize, a
dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill, 239
Do your best, whether winning or losing it.

If you choose to play! — is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate
ghost

Is — the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!* 250

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you
see a monk!

What, 't is past midnight, and you go the
rounds,

And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors
ajar?

The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it up,
Do, — harry out, if you must show your
zeal,

Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong
hole,

And nip each softling of a wee white
mouse, 10

Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him com-
pany!

Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll
take

Your hand away that's fiddling on my
throat,

And please to know me likewise. Whc
am I?

Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off—he's a certain . . .
how d' ye call?

Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you
were best!

Remember and tell me, the day you're
hanged,

How you affected such a gullet's-gripe! so
But you, sir, it concerns you that your
knaves

Pick up a manner, nor discredit you:
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep
the streets

And count fair prize what comes into their
net?

He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make
amends.

Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs
go

Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more be-
side!)

And all's come square again. I'd like his
face—

His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern,—for the slave
that holds

John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("Look you, now," as who
should say)

And his weapon in the other, yet un-
wiped!

It's not your chance to have a bit of
chalk,

A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me
so.

What, brother Lippo's doings, up and
down,

You know them and they take you? like
enough!

I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip
to haunch.

Here's spring come, and the nights one
makes up bands

To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I've been three weeks shut within my
mew,

A-painting for the great man, saints and
saints

And saints again. I could not paint all
night—

Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh
air.

There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs
of song,—

*Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since!
Flower o' the thyme—* and so on. Round
they went.

Scarce had they turned the corner when a
titter

Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight
— three slim shapes,

And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir,
flesh and blood,

That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it
went,

Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and
so dropped,

And after them. I came up with the fan
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well
met,—

*Flower o' the rose,
If I've been merry, what matter who knows!
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the
flesh,*

You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake
your head—

Mine's shaved—a monk, you say—the
sting's in that!

If Master Cosmo announced himself,
Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell me,
now!

I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or
two

On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and
shucks,

Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I went

Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand,
 (Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
 And so along the wall, over the bridge, ⁹⁰
 By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,
 While I stood munching my first bread that month:
 "So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good fat father,
 Wiping his own mouth, 't was refection-time, —
 "To quit this very miserable world? Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;
 By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
 I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
 Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house, ⁹⁹
 Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici Have given their hearts to — all at eight years old.
 Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
 'T was not for nothing — the good bellyful, The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
 And day-long blessed idleness beside!
 "Let's see what the urchin's fit for" — that came next.
 Not overmuch their way, I must confess. Such a to-do! They tried me with their books;
 Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove, ¹¹⁰
All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!
 But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
 Eight years together, as my fortune was, Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
 The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
 And who will curse or kick him for his pains, —
 Which gentleman processional and fine, Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
 Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
 The droppings of the wax to sell again, ¹²⁰
 Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped, —

How say I? — nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
 His bone from the heap of offal in the street, —
 Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
 He learns the look of things, and none the less
 For admonition from the hunger-pinch. I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
 Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
 I drew men's faces on my copy-books, Scrawled them within the antiphony's ¹³⁰
 marge,
 Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
 Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
 And made a string of pictures of the world Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
 On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
 "Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d'ye say?"
 In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark. What if at last we get our man of parts,
 We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese And Preaching Friars, to do our church up ¹⁴⁰
 fine
 And put the front on it that ought to be! And hereupon he bade me daub away.
 Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,
 Never was such prompt disemburdening. First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
 I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,
 From good old gossips waiting to confess Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends, —
 To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot, Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting ¹⁵⁰
 there
 With the little children round him in a row
 Of admiration, half for his beard and half For that white anger of his victim's son
 Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm, Signing himself with the other because of Christ
 (Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
 After the passion of a thousand years)

Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,
(Which the intense eyes looked through)
came at eve 159

On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so
was gone.

I painted all, then cried "T is ask and
have;

Choose, for more's ready!" — laid the
ladder flat,

And showed my covered bit of cloister-
wall.

The monks closed in a circle and praised
loud

Till checked, taught what to see and not to
see,

Being simple bodies, — "That's the very
man!

Look at the boy who stoops to pat the
dog!

That woman's like the Prior's niece who
comes 170

To care about his asthma: it's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared
and fumed;

Their betters took their turn to see and
say:

The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How?
what's here?

Quite from the mark of painting, bless us
all!

Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it's devil's-
game!

Your business is not to catch men with
show,

With homage to the perishable clay, 180
But lift them over it, ignore it all,

Make them forget there's such a thing as
flesh.

Your business is to paint the souls of men —
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no,
it's not . . .

It's vapor done up like a new-born babe —
(In that shape when you die it leaves your
mouth)

It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's
the soul!

Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising
God,

That sets us praising, — why not stop with
him? 190

Why put all thoughts of praise out of our
head

With wonder at lines, colors, and what
not?

Paint the soul, never mind the legs and
arms!

Rub all out, try at it a second time.

Oh, that white smallish female with the
breasts,

She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would
say, —

Who went and danced and got men's heads
cut off!

Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I
ask?

A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go
further 200

And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does
for white

When what you put for yellow's simply
black,

And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks
naught.

Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like.
Both in their order? Take the prettiest
face,

The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint — is it
so pretty 210

You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and
blue,

Can't I take breath and try to add life's
flash,

And then add soul and heighten them three-
fold?

Or say there's beauty with no soul at all —
(I never saw it — put the case the same —

If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents:

That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul
you have missed,

Within yourself, when you return him
thanks. 220

"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my
life, in short,

And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken
bounds:

You should not take a fellow eight years
old

And make him swear to never kiss the girls.

I'm my own master, paint now as I please —
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!

Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front —

Those great rings serve more purposes than just

To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse! 230
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes

Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still — "It's art's decline, my son!

You're not of the true painters, great and old;

Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:

Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"

*Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I'll stick to mine!*

I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know! 240

Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,

They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,

Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint

To please them — sometimes do and sometimes don't;

For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come

A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints —

A laugh, a cry, the business of the world —
(*Flower o' the peach,*

Death for us all, and his own life for each)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over, 250

The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,

And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,

In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass

After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,

Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.

What would men have? Do they like grass or no. —

May they or may n't they? all I want's the thing

Settled forever one way. As it is, 260
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself:

You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your

word,
You find abundantly detestable.

For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there

A-making man's wife: and, my lesson learned,

The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards. 269

You understand me: I'm a beast, I know.
But see, now — why, I see as certainly

As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a young-

ster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,

Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop:
His name is Guidi — he'll not mind the

monks —
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them

talk —
He picks my practice up — he'll paint

apace,
I hope so — though I never live so long,

I know what's sure to follow. You be judge! 280

You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you're my man, you've seen the

world
— The beauty and the wonder and the

power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights

and shades,
Changes, surprises, — and God made it all!

— For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,

For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,

The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman,

child,
These are the frame to? What's it all

about? 290
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,

Wondered at? oh, this last of course! — you say.

But why not do as well as say, — paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?

God's works — paint any one, and count it crime

To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already; nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her — (which you can't)
There's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love ³⁰⁰
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted — better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though!
How much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh, ³¹¹
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning's plain
It does not say to folk — remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones, ³²⁰
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns —
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content, ³²⁹
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.

Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd —
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

— That is — you'll not mistake an idle word

Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me now!

It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:

And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
... There's for you! Give me six months, then go, see

Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!

They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint

God in the midst, Madonna and her babe.
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root ³³¹
When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer.

And then i' the front, of course a saint or two —

Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,

Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white

The convent's friends and gives them a long day,

And Job, I must have him there past mistake,

The man of Uz (and Us without the s,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these ³³⁹

Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I! —
Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck — I'm the man!

Back I shrink — what is this I see and hear?

I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,

My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,

I, in this presence, this pure company!

Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape? ³⁶⁹

Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing forward, puts out a soft palm — "Not so fast!"

— Addresses the celestial presence, "nay — He made you and devised you, after all, Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw —

His camel-hair make up a painting-brush? We come to brother Lippo for all that, *'ste perfect opus!*" So, all smile —

shuffle sideways with my blushing face Under the cover of a hundred wings Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay ³⁸⁰

And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,

Fill, wholly unexpected, in there pops The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off

To some safe bench behind, not letting go The palm of her, the little lily thing That spoke the good word for me in the nick,

Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.

And so all's saved for me, and for the church

A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!

Your hand, sir, and good-by: no lights, no lights! ³⁹⁰

The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,

Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning, Zooks!

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more, So, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once: sit down and all shall happen as you wish. You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?

'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way, Fix his own time, accept too his own price, And shut the money into this small hand When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?

Oh, I'll content him, — but to-morrow, Love! ¹⁰

I often am much wearier than you think, This evening more than usual, and it seems As if — forgive now — should you let me sit Here by the window with your hand in mine

And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole, Both of one mind, as married people use, Quietly, quietly the evening through, I might get up to-morrow to my work Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try. To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this! Your soft hand is a woman of itself, And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require: It saves a model. Sol keep looking so — My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds! — How could you ever prick those perfect ears,

Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet — My face, my moon, my everybody's moon, Which everybody looks on and calls his, And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn, While she looks — no one's: very dear, no less.

You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,

There's what we painters call our harmony! A common grayness silvers everything, — All in a twilight, you and I alike — You, at the point of your first pride in me (That's gone you know), — but I, at every point;

My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole. ⁴⁰ There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;

That length of convent-wall across the way Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside; The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,

And autumn grows, autumn in everything. Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape As if I saw alike my work and self And all that I was born to be and do, A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.

How strange now looks the life he makes us lead; ⁵⁰

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your
head—

All that's behind us! You don't under-
stand

Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people
speak:

And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such thing
should be—

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know, 60
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last
week,

And just as much they used to say in
France.

At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long
past:

I do what many dream of all their lives, 69
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty
such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this
town,

Who strive—you don't know how the
others strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone
says,

(I know his name, no matter)—so much
less!

Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-
up brain, 80

Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to
prompt

This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's
hand of mine.

Their works drop groundward, but them-
selves, I know,

Reach many a time a heaven that's shut
to me,

Enter and take their place there sure
enough,

Though they come back and cannot tell the
world.

My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

The sudden blood of these men! at a
word—

Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it
boils too.

I, painting from myself and to myself, 90
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's
blame

Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of
that?

Speak as they please, what does the moun-
tain care?

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his
grasp,

Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might
gain, 100

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!"
No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
(Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)

Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to
see,

Reaching, that heaven might so replenish
him,

Above and through his art—for it gives
way; 110

That arm is wrongly put—and there
again—

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right.
He means right—that, a child may under-
stand.

Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the
stretch—

Out of me, out of me! And wherefore
out?

Had you enjoined them on me, given me
soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I
think— 120

More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect
brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect
mouth,

and the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —
Had you, with these the same, but brought
a mind!

Some women do so. Had the mouth there
urged

God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"

might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules. 133
Beside, incentives come from the soul's
self;

The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too,
the power —

And thus we half-men struggle. At the
end, 140

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the
truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all
day,

For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it
all.

Well may they speak! That Francis, that
first time, 149

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the
ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden
look, —

One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the
smile,

One arm about my shoulder, round my
neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his
eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of
souls 160

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those
hearts, —

And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my
work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kindly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but
I know —

'Tis done and past; 't was right, my instinct
said;

Too live the life grew, golden and not
gray,

And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should
tempt

Out of the grange whose four walls make
his world. 170

How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your
heart.

The triumph was — to reach and stay there;
since

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your
hair's gold,

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife" —
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer
grows 181

My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these
years . . .

(When the young man was flaming out his
thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares
how, 190

Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and
kings,

Would bring the sweat into that brow of
yours!"

To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is
wrong.

I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line
should go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)

If really there was such a chance, so lost, —
Is, whether you're — not grateful — but
more pleased. ²⁰³

Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!

This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.

See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,

The cue-owls speak the name we call them by. ²⁰⁴

Come from the window, love, — come in, at last,

Inside the melancholy little house

We built to be so gay with. God is just.

King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,

The walls become illumined, brick from brick

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,

That gold of his I did cement them with!

Let us but love each other. Must you go?

That Cousin here again? he waits outside?

Must see you — you, and not with me?
Those loans? ²²¹

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?

Well, let smiles by me! have you more to spend?

While hand and eye and something of a heart

Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?

I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit

The gray remainder of the evening out,

Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly

How I could paint, were I but back in France,

One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face, ²³⁰

Not yours this time! I want you at my side

To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo —

Judge all I do, and tell you of its worth.

Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.

I take the subjects for his corridor,

Finish the portrait out of hand — there, there,

And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough

To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside, ²⁷⁹

What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,

The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night
I regret little, I would change still less.

Since there my past life lies, why alter it?

The very wrong to Francis! — it is true

I took his coin, was tempted and complied,

And built this house and sinned, and all is said.

My father and my mother died of want. ²⁹

Well, had I riches of my own? you see

How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:

And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son

Paint my two hundred pictures — let him try!

No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,

You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance — ²⁶⁰

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,

Meted on each side by the angel's reed,

For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me

To cover — the three first without a wife,

While I have mine! So — still they over-come

Because there's still Lucrezia, — as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

RABBI BEN EZRA

GROW old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life, for which the first was made:

Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all,
nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars, ¹⁰
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends,
transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite elods, untroubled by a
spark.

Poor want of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed ²⁰
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop full bird? Frets doubt
the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I
must believe. ³⁰

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
grudge the throe!

For thence, — a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks, —
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be, ⁴⁰
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not
sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,

Whose spirit works lest arms and legs
want play?
To man, propose this test —
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its
lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse ⁵⁰
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good
to live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete, — I trust what
thou shalt do!" ⁶⁰

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute, — gain most, as
we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon
the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings, ⁷⁰
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now,
than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though
in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone ⁸⁰
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to
indue.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain ar-
rest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently
impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves 170
Around thy base, no longer pause and
press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner
stresses?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's
peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what
needst thou with earth's wheel? 180

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moulded men;
And since, not even while the whirl was
worst,
Did I — to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily — mistake my end, to slake
thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings
past the aim!
My times be in thy hand! 190
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death com-
plete the same!

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS;

OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as
thyself."

[WILL sprawl, now that the heat of day is
best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,

With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his
chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool
slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things
course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him
laugh:
And while above his head a pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and
beard, 9
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and
crunch, —
He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams
cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web,
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at
times,)
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his dam called
God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes — ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is
now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep 20
In confidence he drudges at their task,
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into
speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the
moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to
match,
But not the stars; the stars came other-
wise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as
that:
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the
same. 30

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream
where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm
brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,

A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;

Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun,) ⁴⁰

Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,

And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,

Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.

Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;

Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown

He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye

By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue ⁵⁰

That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,

But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves

That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks

About their hole — He made all these and more,

Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?

He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself:

He would not make what He mislikes or slights, ⁵⁹

An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be —

Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,

Things He admires and mocks too, — that is it.

Because, so brave, so better though they be,

It nothing skills if He begin to plague.

Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,

Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss, —

Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,

Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain;

Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,

And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.

Put case, unable to be what I wish,

I yet could make a live bird out of clay:

Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly? — for, there, see, he hath wings,

And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,

And there, a sting to do his foes offence, &c.

There, and I will that he begin to live,

Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din.
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.

In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay,

And he lay stupid-like, — why, I should laugh;

And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,

Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again, —
Well, as the chance were, this might take or else ⁹

Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry,
And give the manikin three sound legs for one,

Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,

And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.

Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme.

Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,

Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,

Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.

'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs ¹⁰⁰

That march now from the mountain to the sea;

'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,

Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.

'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots

Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;

'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main, ¹⁰⁰

Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,

And envieth that, so helped, such things do more

Than He who made them! What consoles but this?

That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,

And must submit: what other use in things?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint

That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay

When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue:

Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay ¹²⁰

Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt:

Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth,

"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,
I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow through mine!"

Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?

Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows, — the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought, ¹³⁰

Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.

There may be something quiet o'er His head,

Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,

Since both derive from weakness in some way.

I joy because the quails come; would not joy

Could I bring quails here when I have a mind:

This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care that way.

It may look up, work up, — the worse for those ¹⁴⁰

It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,

Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar

To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips do grapes.

'Tis solace making baubles, ay, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books ¹⁵⁰

Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle:
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,

Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;

Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;

Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;

And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,

A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,

Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,

And saith she is Miranda and my wife: ¹⁶⁰
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane

He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;

Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,

And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge

In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban;
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.

'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taketeth his mirth with make-believes: so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things ¹⁷⁰

Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.

Had He meant other, while His hand was
in,
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could
prick,
Or plate my scalp with bone against the
snow,
(Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and
joint,
Like an orc's armor? Ay,—so spoil His
sport!
He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits
Him.

Ay, himself loves what does him good; but
why? ¹⁸⁰

'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded
beast

Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but
hate

Or love, just as it liked him: He hath eyes.
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,

Use all His hands, and exercise much
craft,

By no means for the love of what is worked.

'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summer-
time,

And he wants little, hungers, aches not
much, ¹⁹⁰

Than trying what to do with wit and
strength.

'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile of
turfs,

And squared and stuck there squares of
soft white chalk,

And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on
each,

And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,
And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull
a-top,

Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one
to kill.

No use at all i' the work, for work's sole
sake;

'Shall some day knock it down again: so
He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in
proof! ²⁰⁰

One hurricane will spoil six good months'
hope.

He hath a spite against me, that I know,
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?

So it is, all the same, as well I find.

'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them
firm

With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one
wave,

Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large
tongue,

And licked the whole labor flat: so much for
spite. ²¹⁰

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it
lies)

Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the
shade:

Often they scatter sparkles: there is force!

'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.

Please Him and hinder this? — What Pros-
per does?

Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He:
There is the sport: discover how or die!

All need not die, for of the things o' the
isle

Some flee afar, some dive, some run up
trees; ²²⁰

Those at His mercy,—why, they please
Him most

When . . . when . . . well, never try the
same way twice!

Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow
wroth.

You must not know His ways, and play Him
off,

Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:

'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears

But steals the nut from underneath my
thumb,

And when I threat, bites stoutly in de-
fence:

'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death ²³⁰

For fright at my approach: the two ways
please.

But what would move my choler more than
this,

That either creature counted on its life
To-morrow and next day and all days to
come,

Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,
"Because he did so yesterday with me,

And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always."—

Ay?

Would teach the reasoning couple what
"must" means!

'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So
He. 240

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no
change,

If He have done His best, make no new
world

To please Him more, so leave off watching
this, —

If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day, — or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies: else, here we are,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.
His dam held different, that after death 251
He both plagued enemies and feasted
friends:

Idly! He doth His worst in this our life,
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst, — with which, an
end.

Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their
ball 260

On head and tail as if to save their lives:
Moves them the stick away they strive to
clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive,
suppose

This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him;
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as
now:

Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me
here,

O'erheard this speech, and asked "What
chucklest at?" 270

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the ore to taste:
While myself lit a fire, and made a song
And sung it, "What I hate, be consecrate
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate

For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?"

Hoping the while, since evils sometimes
mend,

Warts rub away and sores are cured with
slime, 280

That some strange day, will either the Quiet
catch

And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at
once!

Crickets stop hissing; not a bird — or, yes,
There scuds His raven that has told Him
all!

It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The
wind

Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house
o' the move,

And fast invading fires begin! White
blaze —

A tree's head snaps — and there, there,
there, there, there, 290

His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!

'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper
lip,

Will let those quails fly, will not eat this
month

One little mess of whelks, so he may
'scape!]

PROSPICE

[Written in the autumn following Mrs. Brown-
ing's death. The closing lines intensify the
association.]

FEAR death? — to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts de-
note

I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the
storm,

The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
form,

Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit
attained,

And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon
be gained,

The reward of it all.
 I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
 The best and the last!
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes,
 and forbore,
 And bade me creep past.
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like
 my peers
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's
 arrears
 Of pain, darkness and cold.
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the
 brave,
 The black minute's at end,
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices
 that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
 Shall change, shall become first a peace out
 of pain,
 Then a light, then thy breast,
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee
 again,
 And with God be the rest!

THE RING AND THE BOOK

BOOK VII

POMPILIA

I AM just seventeen years and five months
 old,
 And, if I lived one day more, three full
 weeks;
 'Tis writ so in the church's register,
 Lorenzo in Lucina, all my names
 At length, so many names for one poor
 child,
 — Francesca Camilla Vittoria Angela
 Pompilia Comparini, — laughable!
 Also 'tis writ that I was married there
 Four years ago: and they will add, I hope,
 When they insert my death, a word or
 two, —
 Omitting all about the mode of death, —
 This, in its place, this which one cares to
 know,
 That I had been a mother of a son
 Exactly two weeks. It will be through
 grace
 O' the Curate, not through any claim I
 have;
 Because the boy was born at, so baptized

Close to, the Villa, in the proper church:
 A pretty church, I say no word against,
 Yet stranger-like, — while this Lorenza
 seems
 My own particular place, I always say. —
 I used to wonder, when I stood scarce high
 As the bed here, what the marble lion
 meant,
 With half his body rushing from the wall,
 Eating the figure of a prostrate man —
 (To the right, it is, of entry by the door) —
 An ominous sign to one baptized like me,
 Married, and to be buried there, I hope.
 And they should add, to have my life com-
 plete,
 He is a boy and Gaetan by name —
 Gaetano, for a reason, — if the friar
 Don Celestine will ask this grace for me
 Of Curate Ottoboni: he it was
 Baptized me: he remembers my whole life
 As I do his gray hair.

All these few things
 I know are true, — will you remember
 them?
 Because time flies. The surgeon cared for
 me,
 To count my wounds, — twenty-two dagger-
 wounds,
 Five deadly, but I do not suffer much —
 Or too much pain, — and am to die to-night.

Oh how good God is that my babe was
 born,
 — Better than born, baptized and hid away
 Before this happened, safe from being hurt!
 That had been sin God could not well for-
 give:
 He was too young to smile and save him-
 self.
 When they took, two days after he was
 born,
 My babe away from me to be baptized
 And hidden awhile, for fear his foe should
 find, —
 The country-woman, used to nursing babes.
 Said, "Why take on so? where is the great
 loss?
 These next three weeks he will but sleep
 and feed,
 Only begin to smile at the month's end;
 He would not know you, if you kept him
 here,
 Sooner than that; so, spend three merry
 weeks

Snug in the Villa, getting strong and stout,
And then I bring him back to be your own,
And both of you may steal to — we know
where!"

The month — there wants of it two weeks
this day!

Still, I half fancied when I heard the knock
At the Villa in the dusk, it might prove
she —

Come to say, "Since he smiles before the
time,"

Why should I cheat you out of one good
hour?

Back I have brought him; speak to him and
judge!"

Now I shall never see him; what is worse,
When he grows up and gets to be my age,
He will seem hardly more than a great boy;
And if he asks, "What was my mother
like?"

People may answer, "Like girls of seven-
teen" —

And how can he but think of this and that,
Lucias, Marias, Sofias, who titter or blush
When he regards them as such boys may
do?

Therefore I wish some one will please to say
I looked already old though I was young;
Do I not . . . say, if you are by to speak . . .
Look nearer twenty? No more like, at
least,

Girls who look aish or reddened when boys
laugh,

Than the poor Virgin that I used to know
At our street-corner in a lovely niche, —
The babe, that sat upon her knees, broke
off, —

Thin white glazed clay, you pitied her the
more:

She, not the gay ones, always got my rose.

How happy those are who know how to
write!

Such could write what their son should read
in time,

Had they a whole day to live out like me.

Also my name is not a common name,
"Pompilia," and may help to keep apart
A little the thing I am from what girls are.
But then how far away, how hard to find
Will anything about me have become,
Even if the boy bethink himself and ask!
No father that ever knew at all,
Nor ever had — no, never had, I say!
That is the truth, — nor any mother left,

Out of the little two weeks that she lived,
Fit for such memory as might assist:

As good too as no family, no name,
Not even poor old Pietro's name, nor hers,
Poor kind unwise Violante, since it seems
They must not be my parents any more.
That is why something put it in my head
To call the boy "Gaetano" — no old name
For sorrow's sake; I looked up to the sky
And took a new saint to begin anew.

One who has only been made saint — how
long?

Twenty-five years: so, carefuller, perhaps,
To guard a namesake than those old saints
grow,

Tired out by this time, — see my own five
saints!

On second thoughts, I hope he will regard
The history of me as what some one
dreamed,

And get to disbelieve it at the last:
Since to myself it dwindles fast to that,
Sheer dreaming and impossibility, —
Just in four days too! All the seventeen
years,

Not once did a suspicion visit me
How very different a lot is mine
From any other woman's in the world.
The reason must be, 't was by step and step
It got to grow so terrible and strange.
These strange woes stole on tiptoe, as it
were,

Into my neighborhood and privacy,
Sat down where I sat, laid them where I
lay;

And I was found familiarized with fear,
When friends broke in, held up a torch and
cried,

"Why, you Pompilia in the cavern thus,
How comes that arm of yours about a wolf?
And the soft length, — lies in and out your
feet

And laps you round the knee, — a snake
it is!"

And so on.

Well, and they are right enough.
By the torch they hold up now: for first,
observe,

I never had a father, — no, nor yet
A mother: my own boy can say at least,
"I had a mother whom I kept two weeks!"
Not I, who little used to doubt . . . I doubt
Good Pietro, kind Violante, gave me birth?

They loved me always as I love my babe
(—Nearly so, that is—quite so could not
be—)

Did for me all I meant to do for him,
Till one surprising day, three years ago,
They both declared, at Rome, before some
judge

In some court where the people flocked to
hear,

That really I had never been their child,
Was a mere castaway, the careless crime
Of an unknown man, the crime and care too
much

Of a woman known too well,—little to
these,

Therefore, of whom I was the flesh and
blood:

What then to Pietro and Violante, both
No more my relatives than you or you?
Nothing to them! You know what they
declared.

So with my husband, — just such a surprise,
Such a mistake, in that relationship!

Every one says that husbands love their
wives,

Guard them and guide them, give them
happiness;

'Tis duty, law, pleasure, religion: well,
You see how much of this comes true in
mine!

People indeed would fain have somehow
proved

He was no husband: but he did not hear,
Or would not wait, and so has killed us all.
Then there is . . . only let me name one
more!

There is the friend, — men will not ask
about,

But tell untruths of, and give nicknames to,
And think my lover, most surprise of all!
Do only hear, it is the priest they mean,
Giuseppe Caponsacchi: a priest — love,
And love me! Well, yet people think he
did..

I am married, he has taken priestly vows,
They know that, and yet go on, say, the
same,

"Yes, how he loves you!" "That was
love" — they say,

When anything is answered that they ask:
Or else "No wonder you love him" — they
say.

Then they shake heads, pity much, scarcely
blame —

As if we neither of us lacked excuse,
And anyhow are punished to the full,
And downright love atones for everything!
Nay, I heard read out in the public court
Before the judge, in presence of my friends,
Letters 't was said the priest had sent to me,
And other letters sent him by myself,
We being lovers!

Listen what this is like!

When I was a mere child, my mother . . .
that's

Violante, you must let me call her so,
Nor waste time, trying to unlearn the
word, . . .

She brought a neighbor's child of my own
age

To play with me of rainy afternoons:
And, since there hung a tapestry on the
wall,

We two agreed to find each other out
Among the figures. "Tisbe, that is you,
With half-moon on your hair-knot, spear in
hand,

Flying, but no wings, only the great scarf
Blown to a bluish rainbow at your back:
Call off your hound and leave the stag
alone!"

"— And there are you, Pompilia, such
green leaves

Flourishing out of your five finger-ends,
And all the rest of you so brown and rough:
Why is it you are turned a sort of tree?"
You know the figures never were ourselves
Though we nicknamed them so. Thus, all
my life, —

As well what was, as what, like this, was
not, —

Looks old, fantastic and impossible:
I touch a fairy thing that fades and fades.
— Even to my babe! I thought, when he
was born,

Something began for once that would not
end,

Nor change into a laugh at me, but stay
Forevermore, eternally quite mine.

Well, so he is, — but yet they bore him off,
The third day, lest my husband should lay
traps

And catch him, and by means of him catch
me.

Since they have saved him so, it was well
done:

Yet thence comes such confusion of what
was

With what will be, — that late seems long
ago,

And, what years should bring round, al-
ready come,

Till even he withdraws into a dream 210

As the rest do: I fancy him grown great,
Strong, stern, a tall young man who tutors
me,

Frowns with the others, "Poor imprudent
child!

Why did you venture out of the safe streets?

Why go so far from help to that lone house?

Why open at the whisper and the knock?"

Six days ago when it was New Year's day,
We bent above the fire and talked of him,
What he should do when he was grown and
great. 219

Violante, Pietro, each had given the arm
I leant on, to walk by, from couch to chair
And fireside, — laughed, as I lay safe at last,
"Pompilia's march from bed to board is
made,

Pompilia back again and with a babe,
Shall one day lend his arm and help her
walk!"

Then we all wished each other more New
Years.

Pietro began to scheme — "Our cause is
gained;

The law is stronger than a wicked man:

Let him henceforth go his way, leave us
ours!

We will avoid the city, tempt no more 230

The greedy ones by feasting and parade, —

Live at the other villa, we know where,

Still farther off, and we can watch the babe

Grow fast in the good air; and wood is
cheap

And wine sincere outside the city gate.

I still have two or three old friends will
grope

Their way along the mere half-mile of road,

With staff and lantern on a moonless night

When one needs talk: they 'll find me, never
fear,

And I 'll find them a flask of the old sort
yet!" 240

Violante said, "You chatter like a crow:

Pompilia tires o' the tattle, and shall to bed:

Do not too much the first day, — somewhat
more

To-morrow, and, the next, begin the cape

And hood and coat' I have spun wool
enough."

Oh what a happy friendly eve was that!

And, next day, about noon, out Pietro
went —

He was so happy and would talk so much,
Until Violante pushed and laughed him
forth

Sight-seeing in the cold, — "So much to
see 250

I' the churches! Swathe your throat three
times!" she cried,

"And, above all, beware the slippery ways,
And bring us all the news by supper-
time!"

He came back late, laid by cloak, staff and
hat,

Powdered so thick with snow it made us
laugh,

Rolled a great log upon the ash o' the
hearth,

And bade Violante treat us to a flask,
Because he had obeyed her faithfully,

Gone sight-see through the seven, and found
no churen

To his mind like San Giovanni — "There's
the fold, 260

And all the sheep together, big as cats!

And such a shepherd, half the size of life,

Starts up and hears the angel" — when, at
the door,

A tap: we started up: you know the rest.

Pietro at least had done no harm, I know;

Nor even Violante, so much harm as makes

Such revenge lawful. Certainly she erred —

Did wrong, how shall I dare say other-
wise? —

In telling that first falsehood, buying me

From my poor faulty mother at a price, 270

To pass off upon Pietro as his child.

If one should take my babe, give him a
name,

Say he was not Gaetano and my own,

But that some other woman made his mouth

And hands and feet, — how very false were
that!

No good could come of that; and all harm
did.

Yet if a stranger were to represent

"Needs must you either give your babe to
me

And let me call him mine forevermore,

Or let your husband get him" — ah, my
God, 280

That were a trial I refuse to face!

Well, just so here: it proved wrong but
seemed right

To poor Violante — for there lay, she said,
My poor real dying mother in her rags,
Who put me from her with the life and all,
Poverty, pain, shame and disease at once,
To die the easier by what price I fetched —
Also (I hope) because I should be spared
Sorrow and sin, — why may not that have
helped? ²⁸⁹

My father, — he was no one, any one, —
The worse, the likelier, — call him, — he
who came,

Was wicked for his pleasure, went his way,
And left no trace to track by; there re-
mained

Nothing but me, the unnecessary life,
To catch up or let fall, — and yet a thing
She could make happy, be made happy
with,

This poor Violante, — who would frown
thereat?

Well, God, you see! God plants us where
we grow.

It is not that, because a bud is born
At a wild brier's end, full if the wild beast's
way, ³⁰⁰

We ought to pluck and put it out of reach
On the oak-tree top, — say, "There the
bud belongs!"

She thought, moreover, real lies were lies
told

For harm's sake; whereas this had good at
heart,

Good for my mother, good for me, and
good

For Pietro who was meant to love a babe,
And needed one to make his life of use,
Receive his house and land when he should
die.

Wrong, wrong, and always wrong! how
plainly wrong!

For see, this fault kept pricking, as faults
do, ³¹⁰

All the same at her heart: this falsehood
hatched,

She could not let it go nor keep it fast.
She told me so, — the first time I was
found

Locked in her arms once more after the
pain,

When the nuns let me leave them and go
home,

And both of us cried all the cares away, —

This it was set her on to make amends,
This brought about the marriage — simply
this!

Do let me speak for her you blame so
much!

When Paul, my husband's brother, found
me out, ³²⁰

Heard there was wealth for who should
marry me,

So, came and made a speech to ask my
hand

For Guido, — she, instead of piercing
straight

Through the pretence to the ignoble truth,
Fancied she saw God's very finger point,
Designate just the time for planting me
(The wild-brier slip she plucked to love and
wear)

In soil where I could strike real root, and
grow,

And get to be the thing I called myself:
For, wife and husband are one flesh, God
says, ³³⁰

And I, whose parents seemed such and
were none,

Should in a husband have a husband now,
Find nothing, this time, but was what it
seemed,

— All truth and no confusion any more.
I know she meant all good to me, all pain
To herself, — since how could it be anguish
but pain

To give me up, so, from her very breast,
The wilding flower-tree-branch that, all
those years,

She had got used to feel for and find fixed?
She meant well: has it been so ill? the
main? ³⁴⁰

That is but fair to ask: one cannot judge
Of what has been the ill or well of life,
The day that one is dying, — sorrows
change

Into not altogether sorrow-like;
I do see strangeness but scarce misery,
Now it is over, and no danger more.

My child is safe; there seems not so much
pain.

It comes, most like, that I am just absolved,
Purged of the past, the foul in me, washed
fair, —

One cannot both have and not have, you
know, — ³⁵⁰

Being right now, I am happy and color
things.

Yes, everybody that leaves life sees all

Softened and bettered: so with other sights:
To me at least was never evening yet
But seemed far beautifuller than its day,
For past is past.

There was a fancy came,
When somewhere, in the journey with my
friend,

We stepped into a hovel to get food; 358
And there began a yelp here, a bark there, —
Misunderstanding creatures that were wroth
And vexed themselves and us till we retired.
The hovel is life: no matter what dogs bit
Or cat scatched in the hovel I break from,
All outside is lone field, moon and such
peace —

Flowing in, filling up as with a sea
Whereon comes Someone, walks fast on the
white,
Jesus Christ's self, Den Celestine de-
clares,
To meet me and calm all things back again.

Beside, up to my marriage, thirteen years
Were, each day, happy as the day was
long: 370
This may have made the change too ter-
rible.

I know that when Violante told me first
The cavalier—she meant to bring next
morn,

Whom I must also let take, kiss my hand —
Would be at San Lorenzo the same eve
And marry me, — which over, we should
go

Home both of us without him as before,
And, till she bade speak, I must hold my
tongue,

Such being the correct way with girl-brides,
From whom one word would make a father
blush, — 380

I know, I say, that when she told me this,
— Well, I no more saw sense in what she
said

Than a lamb does in people clipping wool;
Only lay down and let myself be clipped.
And when next day the cavalier who
came —

(Tisbe had told me that the slim young man
With wings at head, and wings at feet, and
sword

Threatening a monster, in our tapestry,
Would eat a girl else, — was a cavalier) —
When he proved Guido Franceschini, —
old 390

And nothing like so tall as I myself,
Hook-nosed and yellow in a bush of beard,
Much like a thing I saw on a boy's wrist,
He called an owl and used for catching
birds, —

And when he took my hand and made a
smile —

Why, the uncomfortableness of it all
Seemed hardly more important in the case
Than — when one gives you, say, a coin to
spend —

Its newness or its oldness; if the piece 399
Weigh properly and buy you what you wish,
No matter whether you get grime or glare!
Men take the coin, return you grapes and
figs.

Here, marriage was the coin, a dirty piece
Would purchase me the praise of those I
loved:

About what else should I concern myself?

So, hardly knowing what a husband meant,
I supposed this or any man would serve,
No whit the worse for being so uncouth:
For I was ill once and a doctor came 409
With a great ugly hat, no plume thereto,
Black jerkin and black buckles and black
sword,

And white sharp beard over the ruff in
front,

And oh so lean, so sour-faced and aus-
terel —

Who felt my pulse, made me put out my
tongue,

Then oped a phial, dripped a drop or two
Of a black bitter something, — I was cured!
What mattered the fierce beard or the grim
face?

It was the physic beautified the man, 418
Master Malpichi, — never met his match
In Rome, they said, — so ugly all the same!

However, I was hurried through a storm,
Next dark eve of December's dearest day —
How it rained! — through our street and
the Lion's-mouth

And the bit of Corso, — cloaked round,
covered close,

I was like something strange or contra-
band, —

Into blank San Lorenzo, up the aisle,
My mother keeping hold of me so tight,
I fancied we were come to see a corpse
Before the altar which she pulled me
toward.

There we found waiting an unpleasant priest⁴³⁰
 Who proved the brother, not our parish friend,
 But one with mischief-making mouth and eye,
 Paul, whom I know since to my cost. And then
 I heard the heavy church-door lock out help
 Behind us: for the customary warmth,
 Two tapers shivered on the altar. "Quick —
 Lose no time!" cried the priest. And straight-
 way down
 From . . . what's behind the altar where
 he hid —
 Hawk-nose and yellowness and bush and
 all,
 Stepped Guido, caught my hand, and there
 was I⁴⁴⁰
 O' the chancel, and the priest had opened
 book,
 Read here and there, made me say that
 and this,
 And after, told me I was now a wife,
 Honored indeed, since Christ thus weds the
 Church,
 And therefore turned he water into wine,
 To show I should obey my spouse like Christ.
 Then the two slipped aside and talked
 apart,
 And I, silent and scared, got down again
 And joined my mother, who was weeping
 now.
 Nobody seemed to mind us any more,⁴⁵⁰
 And both of us on tiptoe found our way
 To the door which was unlocked by this,
 and wide.
 When we were in the street, the rain had
 stopped,
 All things looked better. At our own house-
 door,
 Violante whispered, "No one syllable
 To Pietro! Girl-brides never breathe a
 word!"
 "— Well treated to a wetting, draggle-
 tails!"
 Laughed Pietro as he opened — "Very
 near
 You made me brave the gutter's roaring
 sea
 To carry off from roost old dove and
 young,⁴⁶⁰
 Trussed up in church, the cote, by me, the
 kite!

What do these priests mean, praying folk
 to death

On stormy afternoons, with Christmas close
 To wash our sins off nor require the rain?"
 Violante gave my hand a timely squeeze,
 Madonna saved me from immodest speech,
 I kissed him and was quiet, being a bride.

When I saw nothing more, the next three
 weeks,

Of Guido — "Nor the Church sees Christ"
 thought I:

"Nothing is changed however, wine is wine
 And water only water in our house.
 Nor did I see that ugly doctor since
 That cure of the illness: just as I was
 cured,
 I am married, — neither scarecrow will re-
 turn."

Three weeks, I chuckled — "How would
 Giulia stare,

And Tecla smile and Tisbe laugh outright,
 Were it not impudent for brides to talk!" —
 Until one morning, as I sat and sang
 At the broidery-frame alone i' the chamber,
 — loud⁴⁷⁰

Voices, two, three together, sobbings too,
 And my name, "Guido," "Paolo," flung like
 stones

From each to the other! In I ran to see.
 There stood the very Guido and the priest
 With sly face, — formal but nowise afraid, —
 While Pietro seemed all red and angry,
 scarce

Able to stutter out his wrath in words;
 And this it was that made my mother sob,
 As he reproached her — "You have mur-
 dered us,"⁴⁸⁰

Me and yourself and this our child beside!"
 Then Guido interposed, "Murdered or not
 Be it enough your child is now my wife!
 I claim and come to take her." Paul put
 in,

"Consider — kinsman, dare I term you
 so? —

What is the good of your sagacity
 Except to counsel in a strait like this?
 I guarantee the parties man and wife
 Whether you like or loathe it, bless or ban.
 May spilt milk be put back within the
 bowl —

The done thing, undone? You, it is, we
 look

For counsel to, you fittest will advise!⁴⁹⁰

Since milk, though spilt and spoilt, does
marble good,
better we down on knees and scrub the
floor,
Than sigh, 'the waste would make a syllabub!'

Help us so turn disaster to account,
to predispose the groom, he needs shall
grace

The bride with favor from the very first,
Not begin marriage an embittered man!"
He smiled, — the game so wholly in his
hands!

While fast and faster sobbed Violante —
"Ay, ⁵⁰⁹

All of us murdered, past averting now!
) my sin, O my secret!" and such like.

Then I began to half surmise the truth;
Something had happened, low, mean, under-
hand,

False, and my mother was to blame, and I
To pity, whom all spoke of, none addressed:
[was the chattel that had caused a crime.
[stood mute, — those who tangle must untie

The embroilment. Pietro cried, "With-
draw, my child!

She is not helpful to the sacrifice ⁵¹⁹
At this stage, — do you want the victim by
While you discuss the value of her blood?
For her sake, I consent to hear you talk:
So, child, and pray God help the inno-
cent!"

[did go and was praying God, when came
Violante, with eyes swollen and red enough,
But movement on her mouth for make-
believe

Matters were somehow getting right again.
She bade me sit down by her side and hear
'You are too young and cannot under-
stand,

Nor did your father understand at first. ⁵³⁰
[wished to benefit all three of us,
And when he failed to take my meaning,
— why,

[tried to have my way at unaware —
Obtained him the advantage he refused.
As if I put before him wholesome food
Instead of broken victual, — he finds
change

! the viands, never cares to reason why,
But falls to blaming me, would fling the
plate

From window, scandalize the neighbor-
hood,

Even while he smacks his lips, — men's
way, my child!

But either you have prayed him unper-
verse ⁵⁴⁰

Or I have talked him back into his wits:

And Paolo was a help in time of need, —
Guido, not much — my child, the way of
men!

A priest is more a woman than a man,
And Paul did wonders to persuade. In
short,

Yes, he was wrong, your father sees and
says;

My scheme was worth attempting: and
bears fruit,

Gives you a husband and a noble name,
A palace and no end of pleasant things. ⁵⁵⁰

What do you care about a handsome youth?
They are so volatile, and tease their wives!
This is the kind of man to keep the house.
We lose no daughter, — gain a son, that's
all:

For't is arranged we never separate,
Nor miss, in our gray time of life, the
tints

Of you that color eve to match with morn.

In good or ill, we share and share alike,
And cast our lots into a common lap,
And all three die together as we lived! ⁵⁶⁰

Only, at Arezzo, — that's a Tuscan town,
Not so large as this noisy Rome, no doubt,
But older far and finer much, say folk, —
In a great palace where you will be queen,
Know the Archbishop and the Governor,
And we see homage done you ere we die.
Therefore, be good and pardon!" — "Par-
don what!

You know things, I am very ignorant:
All is right if you only will not cry!" ⁵⁶⁹

And so an end! Because a blank begins
From when, at the word, she kissed me
hard and hot,

And took me back to where my father
leaned

Opposite Guido — who stood eying him,
As eyes the butcher the cast panting ox
That feels his fate is come, nor struggles
more, —

While Paul looked archly on, pricked brow
at whiles

With the pen-point as to punish triumph
there, —

And said, "Count Guido, take your lawful
wife
Until death part you!"

All since is one blank,
Over and ended; a terrific dream. ⁵⁸⁰
It is the good of dreams — so soon they go!
Wake in a horror of heart-beats, you
may —

Cry, "The dread thing will never from my
thoughts!"

Still, a few daylight doses of plain life,
Cook-crow and sparrow-chirp, or bleat and
bell

Of goats that trot by, tinkling, to be milked;
And when you rub your eyes awake and
wide,

Where is the harm o' the horror? Gone!
So here.

I know I wake, — but from what? Blank,
I say!

This is the note of evil: for good lasts. ⁵⁹⁰
Even when Don Celestine bade "Search
and find!"

For your soul's sake, remember what is past,
The better to forgive it," — all in vain!
What was fast getting indistinct before,
Vanished outright. By special grace per-
haps,

Between that first calm and this last, four
years

Vanish, — one quarter of my life, you know.
I am held up, amid the nothingness,
By one or two truths only — thence I hang,
And there I live, — the rest is death or
dream, ⁶⁰⁰

All but those points of my support. I think
Of what I saw at Rome once in the Square
O' the Spaniards, opposite the Spanish
House:

There was a foreigner had trained a goat,
A shuddering white woman of a beast,
To climb up, stand straight on a pile of
sticks

Put close, which gave the creature room
enough:

When she was settled there, he, one by one,
Took away all the sticks, left just the
four

Whereon the little hoofs did really rest, ⁶¹⁰
There she kept firm, all underneath was air.
So, what I hold by, are my prayer to God,
My hope, that came in answer to the prayer,
Some hand would interpose and save me —
hand

Which proved to be my friend's hand: and,
— blest bliss, —

That fancy which began so faint at first,
That thrill of dawn's suffusion through my
dark,

Which I perceive was promise of my child,
The light his unborn face sent long be-
fore, —

God's way of breaking the good news to
flesh. ⁶²⁰

That is all left now of those four bad years.
Don Celestine urged, "But remember
more!

Other men's faults may help me find your
own.

I need the cruelty exposed, explained,
Or how can I advise you to forgive?"

He thought I could not properly forgive
Unless I ceased forgetting, — which is true:

For, bringing back reluctantly to mind
My husband's treatment of me, — by a light
That's later than my lifetime, I review ⁶³⁰
And comprehend much and imagine more,
And have but little to forgive at last.

For now, — be fair and say, — is it not true
He was ill-used and cheated of his hope

To get enriched by marriage? Marriage
gave

Me and no money, broke the compact so:
He had a right to ask me on those terms,
As Pietro and Violante to declare

They would not give me: so the bargain
stood:

They broke it, and he felt himself ag-
grieved, ⁶⁴⁰

Became unkind with me to punish them.
They said 't was he began deception first,

Nor, in one point whereto he pledged him-
self,

Kept promise: what of that, suppose it
were?

Echoes die off, scarcely reverberate
Forever, — why should ill keep echoing ill,
And never let our ears have done with
noise?

Then my poor parents took the violent way
To thwart him, — he must needs retaliate,
— wrong,

Wrong, and all wrong, — better say, all
blind! ⁶⁵⁰

As I myself was, that is sure, who else
Had understood the mystery: for his wife
Was bound in some sort to help somehow
there.

It seems as if I might have interposed,

blunted the edge of their resentment so,
since he vexed me because they first vexed
him;

"I will entreat them to desist, submit,
give him the money and be poor in peace,—
certainly not go tell the world: perhaps 559
he will grow quiet with his gains."

Yes, say
something to this effect and you do well!
But then you have to see first: I was blind.
That is the fruit of all such wormy ways,
The indirect, the unapproved of God:
You cannot find their author's end and aim,
Not even to substitute your good for bad,
Your straight for the irregular; you stand
stupefied, profitless, as cow or sheep
That miss a man's mind; anger him just
twice

By trial at repairing the first fault. 670
Thus, when he blamed me, "You are a co-
quette,

A lure-owl posturing to attract birds,
You look love-lures at theatre and church,
In walk, at window!"—that, I knew, was
false:

But why he charged me falsely, whither
sought
To drive me by such charge,—how could I
know?

So, unaware, I only made things worse.
I tried to soothe him by abjuring walk,
Window, church, theatre, for good and all,
As if he had been in earnest: that, you
know, 680

Was nothing like the object of his charge.
Yes, when I got my maid to supplicate
The priest, whose name she read when she
would read

Those feigned false letters I was forced to
hear

Though I could hear no word of,—he
should cease

Writing,—nay, if he minded prayer of
mine,

Cease from so much as even pass the street
Whereon our house looked,—in my igno-
rance 688

Was just thwarting Guido's true intent;
Which was, to bring about a wicked change
Of sport to earnest, tempt a thoughtless man
To write indeed, and pass the house, and
more,

Till both of us were taken in a crime.
He ought not to have wished me thus act
lies,

Simulate folly: but—wrong or right, the
wish—

I failed to apprehend its drift. How plain
It follows,—if I fell into such fault,
He also may have overreached the mark,
Made mistake, by perversity of brain,
I' the whole sad strange plot, the grotesque
intrigue 700

To make me and my friend unself our-
selves,

Be other man and woman than we were!
Think it out, you who have the time! for
me,—

I cannot say less; more I will not say.
Leave it to God to cover and undo!
Only, my dullness should not prove too
much!

—Not prove that in a certain other point
Wherein my husband blamed me,—and
you blame, 708

If I interpret smiles and shakes of head,—
I was dull too. Oh, if I dared but speak!
Must I speak? I am blamed that I for-
went

A way to make my husband's favor come.
That is true: I was firm, withstood, re-
fused . . .

—Women as you are, how can I find the
words?

I felt there was just one thing Guido claimed
I had no right to give nor he to take;
We being in estrangement, soul from soul:
Till, when I sought help, the Archbishop
smiled,

Inquiring into privacies of life,
—Said I was blamable—(he stands for
God) 720

Nowise entitled to exemption there.
Then I obeyed,—as surely had obeyed
Were the injunction "Since your husband
bids,

Swallow the burning coal he proffers you!"
But I did wrong, and he gave wrong ad-
vice

Though he were thrice Archbishop,—that,
I know!—

Now I have got to die and see things clear.
Remember I was barely twelve years old—
A child at marriage: I was let alone
For weeks, I told you, lived my child-life
still 730

Even at Arezzo, when I woke and found
First . . . but I need not think of that
again—

Over and ended! Try and take the sense
Of what I signify, if it must be so.
After the first, my husband, for hate's sake,
Said one eve, when the simpler cruelty
Seemed somewhat dull at edge and fit to
bear,

"We have been man and wife six months
almost:

How long is this your comedy to last?
Go this night to my chamber, not your
own!" 740

At which word, I did rush — most true the
charge —

And gain the Archbishop's house — he
stands for God —

And fall upon my knees and clasp his feet,
Praying him hinder what my estranged
soul

Refused to bear, though patient of the rest:
"Place me within a convent," I implored —
"Let me henceforward lead the virgin life
You praise in her you bid me imitate!"
What did he answer? "Folly of ignorance!
Know, daughter, circumstances make or
mar" 750

Virginity, — 't is virtue or 't is vice.
That which was glory in the Mother of
God

Had been, for instance, damnable in Eve
Created to be mother of mankind.
Had Eve, in answer to her Maker's speech
'Be fruitful, multiply, replenish earth' —
Pouted 'But I choose rather to remain
Single' — why, she had spared herself forth-
with

Further probation by the apple and snake,
Been pushed straight out of Paradise! For
see — 760

If motherhood be qualified impure,
I catch you making God command Eve sin!
— A blasphemy so like these Molinists',
I must suspect you dip into their books."
Then he pursued "Twas in your cove-
nant!"

No! There my husband never used deceit.
He never did by speech nor act imply
"Because of our souls' yearning that we
meet

And mix in soul through flesh, which yours
and mine

Wear and impress, and make their visible
selves, 770

— All which means, for the love of you
and me,

Let us become one flesh, being one soul!"
He only stipulated for the wealth;
Honest so far. But when he spoke as
plain —

Dreadfully honest also — "Since our souls
Stand each from each, a whole world's
width between,

Give me the fleshly vesture I can reach
And rend and leave just fit for hell to
burn!" —

Why, in God's name, for Guido's soul's
own sake

Imperilled by polluting mine, — I say, 780
I did resist; would I had overcome!

My heart died out at the Archbishop's
smile;

— It seemed so stale and worn a way o'
the world,

As though 't were nature frowning — "Here
is Spring,

The sun shines as he shone at Adam's fall.
The earth requires that warmth reach
everywhere:

What, must your patch of snow be saved
forsooth

Because you rather fancy snow than
flowers?"

Something in this style he began with me.
Last he said, savagely for a good man, 790

"This explains why you call your husband
harsh,

Harsh to you, harsh to whom you love.
God's Bread!

The poor Count has to manage a mere
child

Whose parents leave untaught the simplest
things

Their duty was and privilege to teach, —
Goodwives' instruction, gossips' lore: they
laugh

And leave the Count the task, — or leave
it me!"

Then I resolved to tell a frightful thing.

"I am not ignorant, — know what I say, 800
Declaring this is sought for hate, not love.

Sir, you may hear things like almighty God
I tell you that my housemate, yes — the
priest

My husband's brother, Canon Girolamo —
Has taught me what depraved and mis-
named love

Means, and what outward signs denote the
sin,

For he solicits me and says he loves,

The idle young priest with naught else to do.

My husband sees this, knows this, and lets be.

Is it your counsel I bear this beside ? "

" — More scandal, and against a priest this time ! 810

What, 't is the Canon now ? " — less snappishly —

" Rise up, my child, for such a child you are,

The rod were too advanced a punishment !

Let 's try the honeyed cake. A parable !

' Without a parable spake he not to them. '

There was a ripe round long black toothsome fruit,

Even a flower-fig, the prime boast of May ;

And, to the tree, said . . . either the spirit o' the fig,

Or, if we bring in men, the gardener, 819

Archbishop of the orchard — had I time

To try o' the two which fits in best: indeed

It might be the Creator's self, but then

The tree should bear an apple, I suppose, —

Well, anyhow, one with authority said,

Ripe fig, burst skin, regale the fig-pecker —

The bird whereof thou art a perquisite ! '

' Nay, ' with a founce, replied the restif fig,

I much prefer to keep my pulp myself:

He may go breakfastless and dinnerless, 820

Supperless of one crimson seed, for me ! '

So, back she flopped into her bunch of leaves.

He flew off, left her, — did the natural Lord, —

And lo, three hundred thousand bees and wasps

Found her out, feasted on her to the shuck: such gain the fig's that gave its bird no bite !

The moral, — fools elude their proper lot,

Empt other fools, get ruined all alike.

Therefore go home, embrace your husband quick ! 828

Which if his Canon brother chance to see, he will the sooner back to book again. "

So, home I did go; so, the worst befell:

So, I had proof the Archbishop was just man,

And hardly that, and certainly no more.

For, miserable consequence to me,

My husband's hatred waxed nor waned at all

His brother's boldness grew effrontery soon,

And my last stay and comfort in myself

Was forced from me: henceforth I looked to God

Only, nor cared my desecrated soul

Should have fair walls, gay windows for the world. 830

God's glimmer, that came through the ruin-top,

Was witness why all lights were quenched inside:

Henceforth I asked God counsel, not mankind.

So, when I made the effort, freed myself,

They said — " No care to save appearance here !

How cynic, — when, how wanton, were enough ! "

— Adding, it all came of my mother's life —

My own real mother, whom I never knew, Who did wrong (if she needs must have done wrong)

Through being all her life, not my four years, 860

At mercy of the hateful: every beast

O' the field was wont to break that fountain-fence,

Trample the silver into mud so murk

Heaven could not find itself reflected there.

Now they cry, " Out on her, who, plashy pool,

Bequeathed turbidity and bitterness

To the daughter stream where Guido dipt and drank ! "

Well, since she had to bear this brand — let me !

The rather do I understand her now, —

From my experience of what hate calls love, — 870

Much love might be in what their love called hate.

If she sold . . . what they call, sold . . . me, her child —

I shall believe she hoped in her poor heart

That I at least might try be good and pure,

Begin to live untempted, not go doomed

And done with ere once found in fault, as she.

Oh and, my mother, it all came to this?
 Why should I trust those that speak ill of
 you,
 When I mistrust who speaks even well of
 them?
 Why, since all bound to do me good, did
 harm, 880
 May not you, seeming as you harmed me
 most,
 Have meant to do most good — and feed
 your child
 From bramble-bush, whom not one orchard-
 tree
 But drew bough back from, nor let one fruit
 fall?
 This it was for you sacrificed your babe?
 Gained just this, giving your heart's hope
 away
 As I might give mine, loving it as you,
 If . . . but that never could be asked of
 me! 888

There, enough! I have my support again,
 Again the knowledge that my babe was, is,
 Will be mine only. Him, by death, I give
 Outright to God, without a further care, —
 But not to any parent in the world, —
 So to be safe: why is it we repine?
 What guardianship were safer could we
 choose?
 All human plans and projects come to
 naught:
 My life, and what I know of other lives,
 Prove that: no plan nor project! God shall
 care!

And now you are not tired? How patient
 then
 All of you, — oh yes, patient this long
 while 900
 Listening, and understanding, I am sure!
 Four days ago, when I was sound and well
 And like to live, no one would understand.
 People were kind, but smiled, "And what
 of him,
 Your friend, whose tonsure the rich dark-
 brown hides?
 There, there! — your lover, do we dream
 he was?
 A priest too — never were such naughti-
 ness!
 Still, he thinks many a long think, never
 fear,
 After the shy pale lady, — lay so light 909
 For a moment in his arms, the lucky one!"

And so on: wherefore should I blame you
 much?
 So we are made, such difference in minds,
 Such difference too in eyes that see the
 minds!
 That man, you misinterpret and misprise —
 The glory of his nature, I had thought,
 Shot itself out in white light, blazed the
 truth
 Through every atom of his act with me:
 Yet where I point you, through the crystal
 shrine,
 Purity in quintessence, one dew-drop,
 You all deserv a spider in the midst. 910
 One says, "The head of it is plain to see,"
 And one, "They are the feet by which I
 judge,"
 All say, "Those films were spun by nothing
 else."

Then, I must lay my babe away with God,
 Nor think of him again for gratitude.
 Yes, my last breath shall wholly spend it
 self
 In one attempt more to disperse the stain.
 The mist from other breath fond mortals
 have made,
 About a lustrous and pellucid soul: 918
 So that, when I am gone but sorrow stays
 And people need assurance in their doubt:
 If God yet have a servant, man a friend,
 The weak a savior, and the vile a foe, —
 Let him be present, by the name invoked.
 Giuseppe-Maria Capousacchi!

There,
 Strength comes already with the utterance!
 I will remember once more for his sake
 The sorrow: for he lives and is belied.
 Could he be here, how he would speak for
 me!

I had been miserable three drear years
 In that dread palace and lay passive now,
 When I first learned there could be such a
 man.
 Thus it fell: I was at a public play,
 In the last days of Carnival last March,
 Brought there I knew not why, but I
 know well.
 My husband put me where I sat, in front:
 Then crouched down, breathed cold through
 me from behind,
 Stationed in the shadow, — none in front
 could see, — 928

I, it was, faced the stranger-throng beneath,

The crowd with upturned faces, eyes one stare, 950

Voices one buzz. I looked but to the stage,
Whereon two lovers sang and interchanged
"True life is only love, love only bliss:
I love thee — thee I love!" then they embraced.

I looked thence to the ceiling and the walls, —

Over the crowd, those voices and those eyes, —

My thoughts went through the roof and out, to Rome

On wings of music, waft of measured words, — 958

Set me down there, a happy child again,
Sure that to-morrow would be festa-day,
Hearing my parents praise past festas more,
And seeing they were old if I was young,
Yet wondering why they still would end discourse

With "We must soon go, you abide your time,

And, — might we haply see the proper friend

Throw his arm over you and make you safe!"

Sudden I saw him; into my lap there fell
A foolish twist of comfits, broke my dream
And brought me from the air and laid me low, 969

As ruined as the soaring bee that's reached
(So Pietro told me at the Villa once)
By the dust-handful. There the comfits lay:

I looked to see who flung them, and I faced
This Caponsacchi, looking up in turn.

Ere I could reason out why, I felt sure,
Whoever flung them, his was not the hand, —

Up rose the round face and good-natured grin 977

Of one who, in effect, had played the prank,
From covert close beside the earnest face, —
Fat waggish Conti, friend of all the world.
He was my husband's cousin, privileged
To throw the thing: the other, silent, grave,
Solemn almost, saw me, as I saw him.

There is a psalm Don Celestine recites,
"Had I a dove's wings, how I fain would flee!"

The psalm runs not "I hope, I pray for wings," —

Not "If wings fall from heaven, I fix them fast," —

Simply "How good it were to fly and rest,

Have hope now, and one day expect content!" 989

How well to do what I shall never do!"

So I said, "Had there been a man like that,
To lift me with his strength out of all strife
Into the calm, how I could fly and rest!

I have a keeper in the garden here
Whose sole employment is to strike me low
If ever I, for solace, seek the sun.

Life means with me successful feigning death,

Lying stone-like, eluding notice so,
Foregoing here the turf and there the sky.
Suppose that man had been instead of this!" 1000

Presently Conti laughed into my ear,
— Had tripped up to the raised place where I sat —

"Cousin, I flung them brutishly and hard!
Because you must be hurt, to look austere
As Caponsacchi yonder, my tall friend
A-gazing now. Ah, Guido, you so close?
Keep on your knees, do! Beg her to forgive!

My cornet battered like a cannon-ball.
Good-by, I'm gone!" — nor waited the reply.

That night at supper, out my husband broke, 1010

"Why was that throwing, that buffoonery?
Do you think I am your dupe? What man would dare

Throw comfits in a stranger lady's lap?
'T was knowledge of you bred such insolence

In Caponsacchi; he dared shoot the bolt,
Using that Conti for his stalking-horse.
How could you see him this once and no more,

When he is always haunting hereabout 1018
At the street-corner or the palace-side,
Publishing my shame and your impudence?
You are a wanton, — I a dupe, you think?
O Christ, what hinders that I kill her quick?"

Whereat he drew his sword and feigned a thrust.

All this, now, — being not so strange to me,
Used to such misconception day by day
And broken-in to bear, — I bore, this time.
More quietly than woman should perhaps;
Repeated the mere truth and held my
tongue.

Then he said, "Since you play the ignorant,
I shall instruct you. This amour, — commenced ¹⁰³⁰

Or finished or midway in act, all's one, —
'T is the town-talk; so my revenge shall be.
Does he presume because he is a priest?
I warn him that the sword I wear shall pink
His lily-scented cassock through and
through,

Next time I catch him underneath your
caves!"

But he had threatened with the sword so
oft ¹⁰³⁷

And, after all, not kept his promise. All
I said was, "Let God save the innocent!
Moreover, death is far from a bad fate.
I shall go pray for you and me, not him;
And then I look to sleep, come death or,
worse,
Life." So, I slept.

There may have elapsed a week,
When Margherita, — called my waiting-
maid,

Whom it is said my husband found too
fair —

Who stood and heard the charge and the
reply,

Who never once would let the matter rest
From that night forward, but rang changes
still

On this the thrust and that the shame, and
how ¹⁰⁴⁹

Good cause for jealousy cures jealous fools,
And what a paragon was this same priest
She talked about until I stopped my ears, —
She said, "A week is gone; you comb your
hair,

Then go mope in a corner, cheek on palm,
Till night comes round again, — so, waste
a week

As if your husband menaced you in sport.
Have not I some acquaintance with his
tricks?

Oh no, he did not stab the serving-man
Who made and sang the rhymes about me
once!

For why? They sent him to the wars next
day. ¹⁰⁵⁰

Nor poisoned he the foreigner, my friend,
Who wagered on the whiteness of my
breast, —

The swarth skins of our city in dispute:
For, though he paid me proper compliments,
The Count well knew he was besotted with
Somebody else, a skin as black as ink,
(As all the town knew save my foreigner) —
He found and wedded presently, — 'Why
need

Better revenge?' — the Count asked. But
what's here? ¹⁰⁵⁵

A priest that does not fight, and cannot wed,
Yet must be dealt with! If the Count
took fire

For the poor pastime of a minute, — me —
What were the conflagration for yourself,
Countess and lady-wife and all the rest?
The priest will perish; you will grieve too
late:

So shall the city-ladies' handsomest
Frankest and liberalest gentleman
Die for you, to appease a scurvy dog
Hanging's too good for. Is there no
escape?

Were it not simple Christian charity ¹⁰⁶⁰
To warn the priest be on his guard, — save
him

Assured death, save yourself from causing
it?

I meet him in the street. Give me a glove.
A ring to show for token! Mum's the
word!"

I answered, "If you were, as styled, my
maid,

I would command you: as you are, you say,
My husband's intimate, — assist his wife
Who can do nothing but entreat 'Be still!'
Even if you speak truth and a crime is
planned, ¹⁰⁶⁵

Leave help to God as I am forced to do!
There is no other help, or we should crave,
Seeing such evil with no human cure.

Reflect that God, who makes the storm de-
sist,

Can make an angry violent heart subside.
Why should we venture teach him govern-
ance?

Never address me on this subject more!"

Next night she said, 'But I went, all the
same,

— Ay, saw your Caponsacchi in his house,

And come back stuffed with news I must
outpour. ¹⁰⁹⁹

I told him, 'Sir, my mistress is a stone:
Why should you harm her for no good you
get?

For you do harm her — prowl about our
place

With the Count never distant half the street,
Lurking at every corner, would you look!

'Tis certain she has witched you with a spell.
Are there not other beauties at your beck?

We all know, Donna This and Monna That
Die for a glance of yours, yet here you
gaze!

Go make them grateful, leave the stone its
cold!

And he — oh, he turned first white and then
red, ¹¹¹⁰

And then — 'To her behest I bow myself,
Whom I love with my body and my soul:
Only a word i' the bowing! See, I write
One little word, no harm to see or hear!
Then, fear no further!' This is what he
wrote.

I know you cannot read, — therefore, let
me!

'My idol!' . . .

But I took it from her hand
And tore it into shreds. "Why, join the
rest

Who harm me? Have I ever done you
wrong?

People have told me 't is you wrong my-
self: ¹¹²⁰

Let it suffice I either feel no wrong
Or else forgive it, — yet you turn my foe!
The others hunt me and you throw a
noose!"

She muttered, "Have your wilful way!" I
asleep.

Whereupon . . . no, I leave my husband
out!

It is not to do him more hurt, I speak.
Let it suffice, when misery was most,
One day, I swooned and got a respite so.
She stooped as I was slowly coming to,
This Margherita, ever on my trace, ¹¹³⁰
And whispered — "Caponasacchi!"

If I drowned,
But woke afloat i' the wave with upturned
eyes,

And found their first sight was a star! I
turned —

For the first time, I let her have her will,
Heard passively, — "The imposthume at
such head,

One touch, one lancet-puncture would re-
lieve, —

And still no glance the good physician's
way

Who rids you of the torment in a trice!
Still he writes letters you refuse to hear.

He may prevent your husband, kill himself,
So desperate and all fordone is he! ¹¹⁴¹

Just hear the pretty verse he made to-day!
A sonnet from Mirtillo. '*Peerless fair. . .*'

All poetry is difficult to read,
— The sense of it is, anyhow, he seeks

Leave to contrive you an escape from
hell,

And for that purpose asks an interview.
I can write, I can grant it in your name,

Or, what is better, lead you to his house.
Your husband dashes you against the
stones; ¹¹⁵⁰

This man would place each fragment in a
shrine:

You hate him, love your husband!"

I returned,
"It is not true I love my husband, — no,
Nor hate this man. I listen while you speak,
— Assured that what you say is false, the
same:

Much as when once, to me a little child,
A rough gaunt man in rags, with eyes on
fire,

A crowd of boys and idlers at his heels,
Rushed as I crossed the Square, and held
my head

In his two hands, 'Here's she will let me
speak! ¹¹⁶⁰

You little girl, whose eyes do good to mine,
I am the Pope, am Sextus, now the Sixth;

And that Twelfth Innocent, proclaimed
to-day,

Is Lucifer disguised in human flesh!
The angels, met in conclave, crowned me!' ¹¹⁷¹

— thus

He gibbered and I listened; but I knew
All was delusion, ere folk interposed,

'Unfasten him, the maniac!' Thus I know
All your report of Caponasacchi false,

Folly or dreaming: I have seen so much
By that adventure at the spectacle, ¹¹⁷¹

The face I fronted that one first, last time:

He would belie it by such words and thoughts.

Therefore while you profess to show him me

I ever see his own face. Get you gone!"

"—That will I, nor once open mouth again, —

No, by Saint Joseph and the Holy Ghost!
On your head be the damage, so adieu!"

And so more days, more deeds I must forget,

Till . . . what a strange thing now is to declare! 1180

Since I say anything, say all if true!

And how my life seems lengthened as to serve!

It may be idle or inopportune,

But, true? — why, what was all I said but truth,

Even when I found that such as are untrue
Could only take the truth in through a lie?

Now — I am speaking truth to the Truth's self:

God will lend credit to my words this time.

It had got half through April. I arose
One vivid daybreak, — who had gone to bed
In the old way my wont those last three years, 1191

Careless until, the cup drained, I should die.
The last sound in my ear, the over-night,
Had been a something let drop on the sly
In prattle by Margherita, "Soon enough
Gayeties end, now Easter's past: a week,
And the Archbishop gets him back to Rome, —

Every one leaves the town for Rome, this Spring, —

Even Caponsacchi, out of heart and hope,
Resigns himself and follows with the flock."
I heard this drop and drop like rain outside
Fast-falling through the darkness while she spoke: 1202

So had I heard with like indifference,
"And Michael's pair of wings will arrive first

At Rome, to introduce the company,
And bear him from our picture where he fights

Satan, — expect to have that dragon loose
And never a defender!" — my sole thought
Being still, as night came, "Done, another day!

How good to sleep and so get near death!" — 1210

When, what, first thing at daybreak, pierced the sleep

With a summons to me? Up I sprang alive,

Light in me, light without me, everywhere
Change! A broad yellow sunbeam was let fall

From heaven to earth, — a sudden draw-bridge lay,

Along which marched a myriad merry motes,

Mocking the flies that crossed them and recrossed

In rival dance, companions new-born too.

On the house-eaves, a dripping shag of weed

Shook diamonds on each dull gray lattice-square, 1220

As first one, then another bird leapt by,
And light was off, and lo was back again,
Always with one voice, — where are two such joys? —

The blessed building-sparrow! I stepped forth,

Stood on the terrace, — o'er the roofs, such sky!

My heart sang, "I too am to go away,
I too have something I must care about,
Carry away with me to Rome, to Rome!
The bird brings hither sticks and hairs and wool,

And nowhere else i' the world; what fly breaks rank, 1230

Falls out of the procession that befits,
From window here to window there, with all
The world to choose, — so well he knows his course?

I have my purpose and my motive too,
My march to Rome, like any bird or fly!
Had I been dead! How right to be alive!
Last night I almost prayed for leave to die,
Wished Guido all his pleasure with the sword

Or the poison, — poison, sword, was but a trick,

Harmless, may God forgive him the poor jest! 1240

My life is charmed, will last till I reach Rome!

Yesterday, but for the sin, — ah, nameless be

The deed I could have dared against myself!

Now — see if I will touch an unripe fruit,
And risk the health I want to have and use!
Not to live, now, would be the wicked-

ness, —
For life means to make haste and go to
Rome
And leave Arezzo, leave all woes at once!"

Now, understand here, by no means mis-
take! 1249

Long ago had I tried to leave that house
When it seemed such procedure would
stop sin;

And still failed more the more I tried — at
first

The Archbishop, as I told you, — next, our
lord

The Governor, — indeed I found my way,
I went to the great palace where he rules,
Though I knew well 't was he who, — when
I gave

A jewel or two, themselves had given me,
Back to my parents, — since they wanted
bread,

They who had never let me want a nose-
gay, — he 1259

Spoke of the jail for felons, if they kept
What was first theirs, then mine, so doubly
theirs,

Though all the while my husband's most
of all!

I knew well who had spoke the word
wrought this:

Yet, being in extremity, I fled

To the Governor, as I say, — scarce opened
lip

When — the cold cruel snicker close be-
hind —

Guido was on my trace, already there,
Exchanging nod and wink for shrug and
smile,

And I — pushed back to him and, for my
pains,

Paid with . . . but why remember what is
past? 1270

I sought out a poor friar the people call

The Roman, and confessed my sin which
came

Of their sin, — that fact could not be re-
pressed, —

The frightfulness of my despair in God:

And feeling, through the grate, his horror
shake,

Implored him, "Write for me who cannot
write,

Apprise my parents, make them rescue me!
You bid me be courageous and trust God:

Do you in turn dare somewhat, trust and
write,

'Dear friends, who used to be my parents
once, 1280

And now declare you have no part in me,
This is some riddle I want wit to solve,
Since you must love me with no difference.
Even suppose you altered, — there's your
hate,

To ask for: hate of you two dearest ones
I shall find liker love than love found here,
If husbands love their wives. Take me
away

And hate me as you do the gnats and
fleas,

Even the scorpions! How I shall rejoice!
Write that and save me!" And he prom-
ised — wrote 1290

Or did not write; things never changed at
all:

He was not like the Augustinian here!

Last, in a desperation I appealed

To friends, who ever wished me better days,
To Guillichini, that's of kin, — "What, I —
Travel to Rome with you? A flying gout
Bids me deny my heart and mind my leg!"
Then I tried Conti, used to brave — laugh
back

The louring thunder when his cousin
scowled 1299

At me protected by his presence: "You —
Who well know what you cannot save me
from, —

Carry me off! What frightens you, a
priest?"

He shook his head, looked grave — "Above
my strength!

Guido has claws that scratch, shows feline
teeth;

A formidabler foe than I dare fret:

Give me a dog to deal with, twice the size!

Of course I am a priest and Canon too,

But . . . by the bye . . . though both, not
quite so bold

As he, my fellow-Canon, brother-priest,
The personage in such ill odor here 1300

Because of the reports — pure birth o' the
brain!

Our Caponsacchi, he's your true Saint
George

To slay the monster, set the Princess free,
And have the whole High-Altar to him-
self:

I always think so when I see that piece
 I' the Pieve, that's his church and mine,
 you know:
 Though you drop eyes at mention of his
 name!"

That name had got to take a half-grotesque,
 Half-ominous, wholly enigmatic sense,
 Like any by-word, broken bit of song ¹³²⁰
 Born with a meaning, changed by mouth
 and mouth

That mix it in a sneer or smile, as chance
 Bids, till it now means naught but ugliness
 And perhaps shame.

— All this intends to say,
 That, over-night, the notion of escape
 Had seemed distemper, dreaming; and the
 name, —

Not the man, but the name of him, thus
 made
 Into a mockery and disgrace, — why,
 she

Who uttered it persistently, had laughed,
 "I name his name, and there you start and
 wince ¹³³⁰

As criminal from the red tongs' touch!" —
 yet now,

Now, as I stood letting morn bathe me
 bright,

Choosing which butterfly should bear my
 news, —

The white, the brown one, or that tinier
 blue, —

The Margherita, I detested so,
 In she came — "The fine day, the good
 Spring time!

What, up and out at window? That is
 best.

No thought of Caponsacchi? — who stood
 there

All night on one leg, like the sentry crane,
 Under the pelting of your water-spout —
 Looked last look at your lattice ere he
 leave ¹³⁴¹

Our city, bury his dead hope at Rome.

Ay, go to looking-glass and make you fine,
 While he may die ere touch one least loose
 hair

You drag at with the comb in such a rage!"

I turned — "Tell Caponsacchi he may
 come!"

"Tell him to come? Ah, but, for charity,

A truce to fooling! Come? What, — come
 this eve?

Peter and Paul! But I see through the
 trick!

Yes, come, and take a flower-pot on his
 head, ¹³⁹

Flung from your terrace! No joke, sincere
 truth?"

How plainly I perceived hell flash and
 fade

O' the face of her, — the doubt that first
 paled joy,

Then, final reassurance I indeed
 Was caught now, never to be free again!
 What did I care? — who felt myself at
 force

To play with silk, and spurn the horsehair-
 springs.

"But — do you know that I have bade him
 come,

And in your own name? I presumed so
 much,

Knowing the thing you needed in your
 heart. ¹³⁵⁸

But somehow — what had I to show in
 proof?

He would not come: half-promised, that
 was all,

And wrote the letters you refused to read.
 What is the message that shall move him
 now?"

"After the Ave Maria, at first dark,
 I will be standing on the terrace, say!"

"I would I had a good long lock of hair
 Should prove I was not lying! Never
 mind!"

Off she went — "May he not refuse, that's
 all — ¹³⁶⁹
 Fearing a trick!"

I answered, "He will come."
 And, all day, I sent prayer like incense up
 To God the strong, God the beneficent,
 God ever mindful in all strife and strait,
 Who, for our own good, makes the need ex-
 treme,

Till at the last he puts forth might and
 saves.

An old rhyme came into my head and rang
 Of how a virgin, for the faith of God,

Hid herself, from the Paynims that pursued,
 In a cave's heart; until a thunderstone,
 Wrapped in a flame, revealed the couch and
 prey: ¹³⁸⁰

And they laughed — "Thanks to lightning,
 ours at last!"
 And she cried, "Wrath of God, assert his
 love!

Servant of God, thou fire, befriend his
 child!"
 And lo, the fire she grasped at, fixed its
 flash,
 Lay in her hand a calm cold dreadful sword
 She brandished till pursuers strewed the
 ground,
 So did the souls within them die away,
 As o'er the prostrate bodies, sworded, safe,
 She walked forth to the solitudes and
 Christ:

So should I grasp the lightning and be
 saved! ¹³⁹⁰

And still, as the day wore, the trouble grew
 Whereby I guessed there would be born a
 star,
 Until at an intense thro' of the dusk,
 I started up, was pushed, I dare to say,
 Out on the terrace, leaned and looked at
 last

Where the deliverer waited me: the same
 silent and solemn face, I first descried
 At the spectacle, confronted mine once
 more.

So was that minute twice vouchsafed me, so
 The manhood, wasted then, was still at
 watch ¹⁴⁰⁰

To save me yet a second time: no change
 Here, though all else changed in the chang-
 ing world!

Spoke on the instant, as my duty bade,
 In some such sense as this, whatever the
 phrase.

Friend, foolish words were borne from you
 to me;
 Your soul behind them is the pure strong
 wind,
 Not dust and feathers which its breath may
 bear:

These to the witless seem the wind itself,
 Since proving thus the first of it they feel.
 If by mischance you blew offence my way,

The straws are dropt, the wind desists no
 whit, ¹⁴¹¹

And how such strays were caught up in the
 street

And took a motion from you, why inquire?
 I speak to the strong soul, no weak disguise.
 If it be truth, — why should I doubt it
 truth? —

You serve God specially, as priests are
 bound,

And care about me, stranger as I am,
 So far as wish my good, that — miracle
 I take to imitate he wills you serve ¹⁴¹⁹

By saving me, — what else can he direct?
 Here is the service. Since a long while now,
 I am in course of being put to death:

While death concerned nothing but me, I
 bowed

The head and bade, in heart, my husband
 strike.

Now I imperil something more, it seems,
 Something that's trulier me than this my-
 self,

Something I trust in God and you to save.
 You go to Rome, they tell me: take me
 there,

Put me back with my people!"

He replied —

The first word I heard ever from his lips,
 All himself in it, — an eternity ¹⁴³¹

Of speech, to match the immeasurable
 depth

O' the soul that then broke silence — "I
 am yours."

So did the star rise, soon to lead my step,
 Lead on, nor pause before it should stand
 still

Above the House o' the Babe, — my babe
 to be,

That knew me first and thus made me know
 him,

That had his right of life and claim on
 mine,

And would not let me die till he was born,
 But pricked me at the heart to save us both,
 Saying, "Have you the will? Leave God
 the way!" ¹⁴⁴¹

And the way was Caponsacchi — "mine,"
 thank God!

He was mine, he is mine, he will be mine.

No pause i' the leading and the light! I
 know,

Next night there was a cloud came, and not he:

But I prayed through the darkness till it broke

And let him shine. The second night, he came.

"The plan is rash; the project desperate:

In such a flight needs must I risk your life,
Give food for falsehood, folly or mistake,
Ground for your husband's rancor and revenge" — ¹⁴⁵¹

So he began again, with the same face.
I felt that, the same loyalty — one star
Turning now red that was so white before —

One service apprehended newly: just
A word of mine and there the white was back!

"No, friend, for you will take me! 'Tis yourself

Risk all, not I, — who let you, for I trust
In the compensating great God: enough!
I know you: when is it that you will come?" ¹⁴⁶⁰

"To-morrow at the day's dawn." Then I heard

What I should do: how to prepare for flight

And where to fly.

That night my husband bade
"— You, whom I loathe, beware you break my sleep

This whole night! Couch beside me like the corpse

I would you were!" The rest you know, I think —

How I found Caponsacchi and escaped.

And this man, men call sinner? Jesus Christ!

Of whom men said, with mouths Thyself mad'st once,

"He hath a devil" — say he was Thy saint,
My Caponsacchi! Shield and show — unshroud ¹⁴⁷¹

In Thine own time the glory of the soul
If aught obscure, — if ink-spot, from vile pens

Scribbling a charge against him — (I was glad

Then, for the first time, that I could not write) —

Flirted his way, have flecked the blaze!

For me,
'Tis otherwise: let men take, sift my thoughts

— Thoughts I throw like the flax for sun to bleach! ¹⁴⁷⁵

I did pray, do pray, in the prayer shall die,
"Oh, to have Caponsacchi for my guide!"

Ever the face upturned to mine, the hand
Holding my hand across the world, — a sense

That reads, as only such can read, the mark
God sets on woman, signifying so

She should — shall peradventure — be divine;

Yet 'ware, the while, how weakness mars the print

And makes confusion, leaves the thing men see,

— Not this man sees, — who from his soul, rewrites

The obliterated charter, — love and strength
Mending what's marred. "So kneels a votarist, ¹⁴⁸⁰

Weeds some poor waste traditionary plot
Where shrine once was, where temple yet

may be,

Purging the place but worshipping the while,

By faith and not by sight, sight clearest so, —

Such way the saints work," — says Don Celestine.

But I, not privileged to see a saint
Of old when such walked earth with crown

and palm,

If I call "saint" what saints call something else —

The saints must bear with me, impute the fault

To a soul i' the bud, so starved by ignorance, ¹⁵⁰¹

Stinted of warmth, it will not blow this year
Nor recognize the orb which Spring-flowers know.

But if meanwhile some insect with a heart
Worth floods of lary music, spendthrift joy —

Some fire-fly renounced Spring for my dwarfed cup,

Crept close to me, brought lustre for the dark,

Comfort against the cold, — what though
excess

Of comfort should miscall the creature —
sun?

What did the sun to hinder while harsh
hands

Petal by petal, crude and colorless, ¹⁵¹⁰
Tore me? This one heart gave me all the
Spring!

Is all told? There's the journey: and
where's time

To tell you how that heart burst out in
shine?

Yet certain points do press on me too hard.
Each place must have a name, though I for-
get:

How strange it was — there where the plain
begins

And the small river mitigates its flow —
When eve was fading fast, and my soul
sank,

And he divined what surge of bitterness,
In overtaking me, would float me back ¹⁵²⁰

Whence I was carried by the striding
day —

So, — "This gray place was famous once,"
said he —

And he began that legend of the place
As if in answer to the unspoken fear,
And told me all about a brave man dead,
Which lifted me and let my soul go on!

How did he know too — at that town's ap-
proach

By the rock-side — that in coming near the
signs

Of life, the house-roofs and the church and
tower,

I saw the old boundary and wall o' the
world ¹⁵³⁰

Rise plain as ever round me, hard and cold,
As if the broken circle joined again,

Tightened itself about me with no break, —
As if the town would turn Arezzo's self, —

The husband there, — the friends my ene-
mies,

All ranged against me, not an avenue
To try, but would be blocked and drive me
back

On him, — this other, . . . oh the heart in
that! ¹⁵³⁸

Did not he find, bring, put into my arms
A new-born babe? — and I saw faces beam

Of the young mother proud to teach me joy,
And gossips round expecting my surprise

At the sudden hole through earth that lets
in heaven.

I could believe himself by his strong will
Had woven around me what I thought the
world

We went along in, every circumstance,
Towns, flowers and faces, all things helped
so well!

For, through the journey, was it natural
Such comfort should arise from first to last?

As I look back, all is one milky way; ¹⁴⁵⁰
Still bettered more, the more remembered,
so

Do new stars bud while I but search for
old,

And fill all gaps i' the glory, and grow
him —

Him I now see make the shine everywhere.
Even at the last when the bewildered flesh,

The cloud of weariness about my soul
Clogging too heavily, sucked down all
sense, —

Still its last voice was, "He will watch and
care;

Let the strength go, I am content: he
stays!"

I doubt not he did stay and care for all —
From that sick minute when the head

swam round, ¹⁵⁶¹
And the eyes looked their last and died on
him,

As in his arms he caught me, and, you say,
Carried me in, that tragical red eve,

And laid me where I next returned to life
In the other red of morning, two red plates

That crushed together, crushed the time
between.

And are since then a solid fire to me, —
When in, my dreadful husband and the
world

Broke, — and I saw him, master, by hell's
right, ¹⁵⁷⁰

And saw my angel helplessly held back
By guards that helped the malice — the

lamb prone,
The serpent towering and triumphant —
then

Came all the strength back in a sudden
swell,

I did for once see right, do right, give
tongue

The adequate protest: for a worm must
turn

If it would have its wrong observed by
God.

I did spring up, attempt to thrust aside
That ice-block 'twixt the sun and me, lay
low 1579

The neutralizer of all good and truth.
If I sinned so, — never obey voice more
O' the Just and Terrible, who bids us —
“Bear!”

Not — “Stand by, bear to see my angels
bear!”

I am clear it was on impulse to serve God
Not save myself, — no — nor my child un-
born!

Had I else waited patiently till now? —
Who saw my old kind parents, silly-sooth
And too much trustful, for their worst of
faults,

Cheated, browbeaten, stripped and starved,
cast out

Into the kennel: I remonstrated, 1590
Then sank to silence, for, — their woes at
end,

Themselves gone, — only I was left to
plague.

If only I was threatened and belied,
What matter? I could bear it and did
bear;

It was a comfort, still one lot for all:
They were not persecuted for my sake
And I, estranged, the single happy one.
But when at last, all by myself I stood
Obeying the clear voice which bade me
rise, 1599

Not for my own sake but my babe unborn,
And take the angel's hand was sent to
help —

And found the old adversary athwart the
path —

Not my hand simply struck from the
angel's, but

The very angel's self made foul i' the face
By the fiend who struck there, — that I
would not bear,

That only I resisted! So, my first
And last resistance was invincible.
Prayers move God; threats, and nothing
else, move men!

I must have prayed a man as he were God
When I implored the Governor to right
My parents' wrongs: the answer was a
smile. 1611

The Archbishop, — did I clasp his feet
enough,

Hide my face hotly on them, while I told
More than I dared make my own mother
know?

The profit was — compassion and a jest.
This time, the foolish prayers were done
with, right

Used might, and solemnized the sport at
once.

All was against the combat: vantage, mine!
The runaway avowed, the accomplice-wife.
In company with the plau-contriving priest:
Yet, shame thus rank and patent, I struck
bare, 1612

At foe from head to foot in magic mail,
And off it withered, cobweb-armory
Against the lightning! 'T was truth singed
the lies

And saved me, not the vain sword nor
weak speech!

You see, I will not have the service fail!
I say, the angel saved me: I am safe!
Others may want and wish, I wish not
want

One point o' the circle plainer, where I
stand

Traced round about with white to front the
world. 1578

What of the calumny I came across,
What o' the way to the end? — the end
crowns all.

The judges judged aright i' the main, gave
me

The uttermost of my heart's desire, a trace
From torture and Arezzo, balm for hurt,
With the quiet nuns, — God recompense
the good!

Who said and sang away the ugly past.
And, when my final fortune was revealed,
What safety, while, amid my parents'
arms,

My babe was given me! Yes, he saved me:
babe: 1575

It would not have peeped forth, the bird-
like thing,

Through that Arezzo noise and trouble
back

Had it returned nor ever let me see!
But the sweet peace cured all, and let me
live

And give my bird the life among the leaves
God meant him! Weeks and months of
quietude,

I could lie in such peace and learn so
much —

Begin the task, I see how needful now, &c.
Of understanding somewhat of my past, —
Know life a little, I should leave so soon.

Therefore, because this man restored my
soul, ¹⁶⁵¹

All has been right; I have gained my gain,
enjoyed

As well as suffered, — nay, got foretaste
too

Of better life beginning where this ends —
All through the breathing-while allowed
me thus,

Which let good premonitions reach my soul
Unthwarted, and benignant influence flow
And interpenetrate and change my heart,
Uncrossed by what was wicked, — nay, un-
kind.

For, as the weakness of my time drew nigh,
Nobody did me one disservice more, ¹⁶⁶¹
Spoke coldly or looked strangely, broke the
love

I lay in the arms of, till my boy was born,
Born all in love, with naught to spoil the
bias

A whole long fortnight: in a life like mine
A fortnight filled with bias is long and
much.

All women are not mothers of a boy,
Though they live twice the length of my
whole life,

And, as they fancy, happily all the same.
There I lay, then, all my great fortnight
long, ¹⁶⁷⁰

As if it would continue, broaden out
Happily more and more, and lead to heaven:
Christmas before me, — was not that a
chance?

I never realized God's birth before —
How he grew likest God in being born.
This time I felt like Mary, had my babe
Lying a little on my breast like hers.
So all went on till, just four days ago —
The night and the tap.

Oh, it shall be success
To the whole of our poor family! My
friends ¹⁶⁸⁰

... Nay, father and mother, — give me
back my word!

They have been rudely stripped of life, dis-
graced

Like children who must needs go clothed
too fine,

Carry the garb of Carnival in Lent.
If they too much affected frippery
They have been punished and submit them-
selves,

Say no word: all is over, they see God

Who will not be extreme to mark their
fault

Or he had granted respite: they are safe.

For that most woeful man my husband
once, ¹⁶⁹⁰

Who, needing respite, still draws vital
breath,

I — pardon him? So far as lies in me,
I give him for his good the life he takes,
Praying the world will therefore acquiesce.
Let him make God amends, — none, none
to me

Who thank him rather that, whereas strange
fate

Mockingly styled him husband and me wife,
Himself this way at least pronounced di-
vorce,

Blotted the marriage-bond: this blood of
mine

Flies forth exultingly at any door, ¹⁷⁰⁰
Washes the parchment white, and thanks
the blow.

We shall not meet in this world nor the
next,

But where will God be absent? In his face
Is light, but in his shadow healing too:
Let Guido touch the shadow and be healed!
And as my presence was importunate, —
My earthly good, temptation and a snare, —
Nothing about me but drew somehow
down

His hate upon me, — somewhat so excused
Therefore, since hate was thus the truth of
him, — ¹⁷¹⁰

May my evanishment forevermore
Help further to relieve the heart that cast
Such object of its natural loathing forth!
So he was made; he nowise made himself:
I could not love him, but his mother did.
His soul has never lain beside my soul;
But for the unresisting body, — thanks!
He burned that garment spotted by the
flesh.

Whatever he touched is rightly ruined:
plague ¹⁷¹⁹

It caught, and disinfection it had craved
Still but for Guido; I am saved through
him

So as by fire; to him — thanks and farewell!

Even for my babe, my boy, there's safety
thence —

From the sudden death of me, I mean: we
poor

Weak souls, how we endeavor to be strong!
I was already using up my life, —
This portion, now, should do him such a
good,

This other go to keep off such an ill!
The great life; see, a breath and it is gone!
So is detached, so left all by itself 1730
The little life, the fact which means so
much.

Shall not God stoop the kindlier to his
work,

His marvel of creation, foot would crush,
Now that the hand he trusted to receive
And hold it, lets the treasure fall perforce?
The better; he shall have in orphanage
His own way all the clearer: if my babe
Outlived the hour — and he has lived two
weeks —

It is through God who knows I am not by.
Who is it makes the soft gold hair turn
black, 1740

And sets the tongue, might lie so long at
rest,

Trying to talk? Let us leave God alone!
Why should I doubt he will explain in time
What I feel now, but fail to find the words?
My babe nor was, nor is, nor yet shall be
Count Guido Franceschini's child at all —
Only his mother's, born of love not hate!
So shall I have my rights in after-time.

It seems absurd, impossible to-day;
So seems so much else, not explained but
known! 1750

Ah! Friends, I thank and bless you every
one!

No more now: I withdraw from earth and
man

To my own soul, compose myself for God.

Well, and there is more! Yes, my end of
breath

Shall bear away my soul in being true!
He is still here, not outside with the world,
Here, here, I have him in his rightful
place!

'Tis now, when I am most upon the move,
I feel for what I verily find — again
The face, again the eyes, again, through all,
The heart and its immeasurable love 1761
Of my one friend, my only, all my own,
Who put his breast between the spears and
me.

Ever with Caponsacchi! Otherwise
Here alone would be failure, loss to me —

How much more loss to him, with life de-
barred

From giving life, love locked from love's
display,

The day-star stopped its task that makes
night morn!

O lover of my life, O soldier-saint, 1760
No work begun shall ever pause for death!
Love will be helpful to me more and more
I' the coming course, the new path I must
tread —

My weak hand in thy strong hand, strong
for that!

Tell him that if I seem without him now,
That's the world's insight! Oh, he under-
stands!

He is at Civita — do I once doubt
The world again is holding us apart?

He had been here, displayed in my be-
half

The broad brow that reverberates the truth,
And flashed the word God gave him, back
to man! 1770

I know where the free soul is flown! My
fate

Will have been hard for even him to bear:
Let it confirm him in the trust of God,
Showing how holily he dared the deed!

And, for the rest, — say, from the deed, so
touch

Of harm came, but all good, all happiness,
Not one faint fleck of failure! Why ex-
plain?

What I see, oh, he sees and how much
more!

Tell him, — I know not wherefore the true
word 1780

Should fade and fall unuttered at the last —
It was the name of him I sprang to meet
When came the knock, the summons and
the end.

"My great heart, my strong hand are back
again!"

I would have sprung to these, beckoning
across

Murder and hell gigantic and distinct
O' the threshold, posted to exclude me
heaven:

He is ordained to call and I to come!
Do not the dead wear flowers when dressed
for God?

Say, — I am all in flowers from head to
foot! 1790

Say, — not one flower of all he said and did,
Might seem to flit unnoticed, fade unknown,

But dropped a seed, has grown a balsam-
tree
Whereof the blossoming perfumes the
place
At this supreme of moments! He is a
priest;
He cannot marry therefore, which is right:
I think he would not marry if he could.
Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable:
In heaven we have the real and true and
sure.
'Tis there they neither marry nor are
given 1820
In marriage but are as the angels: right,
Oh how right that is, how like Jesus
Christ
To say that! Marriage-making for the
earth,
With gold so much, — birth, power, repute
so much,
Or beauty, youth so much, in lack of these!
Be as the angels rather, who, apart,
Know themselves into one, are found at
length
Married, but marry never, no, nor give
In marriage; they are man and wife at
once
When the true time is: here we have to
wait 1820
Not so long never! Could we by a wish
Have what we will and get the future now,
Would we wish aught done undone in the
past?
So, let him wait God's instant men call
years;
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great
soul,
Do out the duty! Through such souls
alone
God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us 't the dark to rise by. And I
rise.

HERVÉ RIEL

[This ballad was printed first in the *Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1871.]

I

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hun-
dred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French, — woe
to France!

And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter
through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal
of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint
Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'T was the squadron that escaped, with the
victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his
great ship, *Damfreville*;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all; 10
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us
quick — or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk
and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships
like these to pass?" laughed they:
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the
passage scarred and scored,
Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve
and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the
single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 't is ticklish for a craft
of twenty tons, 20
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 't is slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

IV

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would
you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked to-
gether stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound? 30
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended *Damfreville* his speech).
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the
vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

"Give the word!" But no such word
 Was ever spoke or heard;
 For up stood, for out stepped, for in
 struck amid all these
 — A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate —
 first, second, third? 40
 No such mau of mark, and meet
 With his betters to compete!
 But a simple Breton sailor pressed by
 Tourville for the fleet,
 A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the
 Croisickese.

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we
 here?" cries Hervé Riel:
 "Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you
 cowards, fools, or rogues?
 Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who
 took the soundings, tell
 On my fingers every bank, every shallow,
 every swell
 'Twixt the offing here and Grève where
 the river disembogues?
 Are you bought by English gold? Is it
 love the lying's for? 50
 Morn and eve, night and day,
 Have I piloted your bay,
 Entered free and anchored fast at the foot
 of Solidor.
 Burn the fleet and ruin France? That
 were worse than fifty Hagues!
 Sirs, they know I speak the truth!
 Sirs, believe me there's a way!
 Only let me lead the line,
 Have the biggest ship to steer,
 Get this 'Formidable' clear,
 Make the others follow mine,
 And I lead them, most and least, by a pas-
 sage I know well, 60
 Right to Solidor past Grève,
 And there lay them safe and sound;
 And if one ship misbehave,
 — Keel so much as grate the ground,
 Why, I've nothing but my life, — here's
 my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
 "Steer us in, then, small and great!
 Take the helm, lead the line, save the
 squadron!" cried its chief.
 Captains, give the sailor place!
 He is Admiral, in brief. 70

Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
 See the noble fellow's face
 As the big ship, with a bound,
 Clears the entry like a hound,
 Keeps the passage as its inch of way won
 the wide sea's profound!
 See, safe through shoal and rock,
 How they follow in a flock,
 Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that
 grates the ground,
 Not a spar that comes to grief!
 The peril, see, is past,
 All are harbored to the last,
 And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"
 — sure as fate,
 Up the English come — too late!

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm:
 They see the green trees wave
 On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
 Hearts that bled are stanch'd with
 balm.
 "Just our rapture to enhance,
 Let the English rake the bay,
 Gnash their teeth and glare askance
 As they cannonade away!
 'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding
 the Rance!"
 How hope succeeds despair on each Cap-
 tain's countenance!
 Out burst all with one accord,
 "This is Paradise for Hell!
 Let France, let France's King
 Thank the man that did the thing!"
 What a shout, and all one word,
 "Hervé Riel!"
 As he stepped in front once more,
 Not a symptom of surprise
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,
 Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
 I must speak out at the end,
 Though I find the speaking hard.
 Praise is deeper than the lips:
 You have saved the King his ships,
 You must name your own reward.
 'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
 Demand whate'er you will,
 France remains your debtor still,
 Ask to heart's content and have! or my
 name's not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
 On the bearded mouth that spoke,
 As the honest heart laughed through
 Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
 "Since I needs must say my say,
 Since on board the duty's done,
 And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point,
 what is it but a run? — 120
 Since 't is ask and have, I may —
 Since the others go ashore —
 Come! A good whole holiday!
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I
 call the Belle Aurore!"
 That he asked and that he got, — nothing
 more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost:
 Not a pillar nor a post
 In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it
 befell;
 Not a head in white and black
 On a single fishing-smack, 130
 In memory of the man but for whom had
 gone to wrack
 All that France saved from the fight
 whence England bore the bell.
 Go to Paris: rank on rank
 Search the heroes flung pell-mell
 On the Louvre, face and flank!
 You shall look long enough ere you come
 to Hervé Riel.
 So, for better and for worse,
 Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
 In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once
 more
 Save the squadron, honor France, love thy
 wife the Belle Aurore! 140

PHEIDIPIDES

Χαίρετε, νεικήτερ.

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river
 and rock!
 Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes,
 honor to all!
 Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron,
 co-equal in praise
 — Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her
 of the ægis and spear!
 Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised
 be your peer,

Now, henceforth and forever, — O latest
 to whom I upraise
 Hand and heart and voice! For Athens,
 leave pasture and flock!
 Present to help, potent to save, Pan —
 patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see,
 I return!
 See, 't is myself here standing alive, no
 spectre that speaks! 10
 Crowned with the myrtle, did you command
 me, Athens and you,
 "Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach
 Sparta for aid!
 Persia has come, we are here, where is
 She?" Your command I obeyed,
 Ran and raced: like stubble, some field
 which a fire runs through,
 Was the space between city and city: two
 days, two nights did I burn
 Over the hills, under the dales, down pits
 and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but
 for "Persia has come!
 Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute,
 water and earth;
 Razed to the ground is Eretria — but
 Athens, shall Athens sink,
 Drop into dust and die — the flower of
 Hellas utterly die, 20
 Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta,
 the stupid, the stander-by?
 Answer me quick, what help, what hand
 do you stretch o'er destruction's
 brink?
 How, — when? No care for my limbs! —
 there's lightning in all and some —
 Fresh and fit your message to bear, once
 lips give it birth!"

O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did
 Sparta respond?
 Every face of her leered in a furrow of
 envy, mistrust,
 Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glit-
 ter of gratified hate!
 Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast
 for excuses. I stood
 Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as
 fire frets, an inch from dry
 wood:
 "Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and
 still they debate? 30

Thunder, thou Zeus! Athens, are Spartans
a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis,
clang them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their
answer at last!

"Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid,
— may Sparta befriend?"

Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty
the issue at stake!

Count we no time lost time which lags
through respect to the gods!

Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare,
whatever the odds

In your favor, so long as the moon, half-
orbed, is unable to take

Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already
she rounds to it fast:

Athens must wait, patient as we — who
judgment suspend."

Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy
name, I had mouldered to ash!

That sent a blaze through my blood; off,
off and away was I back,

— Not one word to waste, one look to lose
on the false and the vile!

Yet "O gods of my land!" I cried, as each
hillock and plain,

Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rush-
ing past them again,

"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of
hours we paid you erewhile?"

Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome
libation! Too rash

Love in its choice, paid you so largely ser-
vice so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay, — I bid you cease
to enwreath

Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the
Persian's foot,

You that, our patrons were pledged, should
never adorn a slave!

Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy
wild waste tract!

Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What
matter if slack

My speed may hardly be, for homage to
crag and to cave

No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at
least I can breathe,

Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no
lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes'
ridge;

Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till
sudden, a bar

Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me,
blocking the way.

Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse,
the fissure across:

"Where I could enter, there I depart by!
Night in the fosse?"

Athens to aid? Though the dive were
through Erebos, thus I obey —

Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely
arise! No bridge

Better!" — when — ha! what was it I came
on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — my-
jestical Pan!

Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss
cushioned his hoof:

All the great god was good in the eyes
grave-kindly — the curl

Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at im-
mortal's awe,

As, under the human trunk, the goat-thigh
grand I saw.

"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my
brain of a whirl:

"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?"
he gracious began:

"How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds
me aloof?"

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes
me no feast!

Wherefore? Than I what godship to Ath-
ens more helpful of old?

Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test
Pan, trust me!

Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to
scorn, have faith

In the temples and tombs! Go, say to
Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:

When Persia — so much as strews not the
soil — is cast in the sea,

Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks
with your most and least,

Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one
cause with the free and the bold!"

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the
place, be the pledge!'"

(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herb-
age I bear

— Fennel — I grasped it a-tremble with dew — whatever it bode)

"While, as for thee" . . . But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto —

Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.

Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was my road:

Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!

Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,

Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift is promised thyself?"

Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother demands of her son!"

Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length

His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength

Into the utterance — "Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done

Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release

From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!"

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!

Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow, —

Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under the deep,

Whelm her away forever; and then, — no Athens to save, —

Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave, —

Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep

Close to my knees, — recount how the God was awful yet kind,

Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him — so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:

So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!

Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!

'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,

Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field

And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,

Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,

Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute

Is still "Rejoice!" — his word which brought rejoicing indeed.

So is Pheidippides happy for ever, — the noble strong man

Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;

He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell

Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,

So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute:

"Athens is saved!" — Pheidippides dies in the shout for his mead.

CLIVE

Browning had this story from Mrs. Jameson as early as 1846, she in turn having just heard Macaulay tell it. Browning's own narrative preceded Clive's death by a week only.

I AND Clive were friends — and why not? Friends! I think you laugh, my lad.

Clive it was gave England India, while your father gives — egad,

England nothing but the graceless boy who lures him on to speak —

"Well, Sir, you and Clive were comrades —" with a tongue thrust in your cheek!

Very true: in my eyes, your eyes, all the world's eyes, Clive was man,

I was, am, and ever shall be — mouse, nay, mouse of all its clan

Sorriest sample, if you take the kitchen's estimate for fame;

While the man Clive — he fought Plassy spoiled the clever foreign game,

Conquered and annexed and Englished!

Never mind! As o'er my punch (You away) I sit of evenings, — silence, save for biscuit crunch,

Black, unbroken, — thought grows busy
 thrids each pathway of old years,
 Notes this forthright, that meander, till the
 long-past life appears
 Like an outspread map of country plodded
 through, each mile and rood,
 Once, and well remembered still, — I'm
 startled in my solitude
 Ever and anon by — what's the sudden
 mocking light that breaks
 On me as I slap the table till no rummer-
 glass but shakes
 While I ask — aloud, I do believe, God
 help me! — "Was it thus?
 Can it be that so I faltered, stopped when
 just one step for us —"
 (Us, — you were not born, I grant, but
 surely some day born would be)
 " — One bold step had gained a province"
 (figurative talk, you see) ²⁰
 "Got no end of wealth and honor, — yet I
 stood stock-still no less?"
 — "For I was not Clive," you comment:
 but it needs no Clive to guess
 Wealth were handy, honor ticklish, did no
 writing on the wall
 Warn me "Trespasser, 'ware man-trap!"
 Him who braves that notice —
 call
 Hero! none of such heroics suit myself who
 read plain words,
 Doff my hat, and leap no barrier. Scrip-
 ture says, the land's the Lord's:
 Louts then — what avail the thousand, noisy
 in a smock-frocked ring,
 All-agog to have me trespass, clear the
 fence, be Clive their king?
 Higher warrant must you show me ere I
 set one foot before
 T'other in that dark direction, though I
 stand forevermore ³⁰
 Poor as Job and meek as Moses. Ever-
 more? No! By and by
 Job grows rich and Moses valiant, Clive
 turns out less wise than I.
 Don't object "Why call him friend, then?"
 Power is power, my boy, and still
 Marks a man, — God's gift magnific, exer-
 cised for good or ill.
 You've your boot now on my hearth-rug,
 tread what was a tiger's akin:
 Rarely such a royal monster as I lodged
 the bullet in!
 True, he murdered half a village, so his
 own death came to pass;

Still, for size and beauty, cunning, courage
 — ah, the brute he was!
 Why, that Clive, — that youth, that green-
 horn, that quill-driving clerk, in
 fine, —
 He sustained a siege in Arcot . . . But the
 world knows! Pass the wine. ⁴⁰
 Where did I break off at? How bring Clive
 in? Oh, you mentioned "fear"!
 Just so: and, said I, that minds me of a
 story you shall hear.
 We were friends then, Clive and I: so, when
 the clouds, about the orb
 Late supreme, encroaching slowly, surely,
 threaten to absorb
 Ray by ray its noontide brilliance, — friend-
 ship might, with steadier eye
 Drawing near, bear what had burned else,
 now no blaze — all majesty.
 Too much bee's-wing floats my figure?
 Well, suppose a castle's new:
 None presume to climb its ramparts, none
 find foothold sure for shoe
 'Twixt those squares and squares of granite
 plating the impervious pile
 As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses:
 crocodile. ⁵⁰
 Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-
 dismantled? From without
 Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every
 cockney prates about
 Towers — the heap he kicks now! turrets —
 just the measure of his cane!
 Will that do? Observe moreover — (same
 similitude again) —
 Such a castle seldom crumbles by sheer
 stress of cannonade:
 'Tis when foes are foiled and fighting's
 finished that vile rains invade,
 Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds
 congregating find no holes
 Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made
 for banner-poles.
 So Clive crumbled slow in London, crashed
 at last.

A week before,
 Dining with him, — after trying churchyard
 chat of days of yore, —
 Both of us stopped, tired as tombstones,
 head-piece, foot-piece, when they less
 Each to other, drowned in fog-smoke, o'er
 a coffined Past between.

As I saw his head sink heavy, guessed the
soul's extinguishment
By the glazing eyeball, noticed how the
furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest
liquor, — "One more throw
Fry for Clive!" thought I: "Let's venture
some good rattling question!"
So —

"Come Clive, tell us" — out I blurted
— "what to tell in turn, years
hence,

When my boy — suppose I have one — asks
me on what evidence

I maintain my friend of Plasey proved a
warrior every whit

Worth your Alexanders, Cæsars, Marlbor-
oughs and — what said Pitt? —

Frederick the Fierce himself! Clive told
me once" — I want to say —

"Which feat out of all those famous doings
bore the bell away

— In his own calm estimation, mark you,
not the mob's rough guess —

Which stood foremost as evincing what
Clive called courageousness!

Come! what moment of the minute, what
speck-centre in the wide

Circle of the action saw your mortal fairly
deified?

(Let alone that filthy sleep-stuff, swallow
bold this wholesome Port!)

If a friend has leave to question, — when
were you most brave, in short?"

Up he arched his brows o' the instant — for-
midably Clive again.

"When was I most brave? I'd answer,
were the instance half as plain

As another instance that's a brain-lodged
crystal — curse it! — here

Freezing when my memory touches — ugh!
— the time I felt most fear.

Ugh! I cannot say for certain if I showed
fear — anyhow,

Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered,
since I shiver now."

"Fear!" smiled I. "Well, that's the rarer:
that's a specimen to seek,

Ticket up in one's museum, *Mind-Freaks*,
Lord Clive's Fear, Unique!"

Down his brows dropped. On the table
painfully he pored as though

Tracing, in the stains and streaks there,
thoughts encrusted long ago.

When he spoke 't was like a lawyer reading
word by word some will,

Some blind jungle of a statement, — beat-
ing on and on until

Out there leaps fierce life to fight with.

"This fell in my factor-days.

Deak-drudge, slaving at Saint David's, one
must game, or drink, or craze.

I chose gaming: and, — because your high-
flown gamesters hardly take

Umbrage at a factor's elbow if the factor
pays his stake, —

I was wiuked at in a circle where the com-
pany was choice.

Captain This and Major That, men high of
color, loud of voice,

Yet indulgent, condescending to the modest
juvenile

Who not merely risked but lost his hard-
earned guineas with a smile.

"Down I sat to cards, one evening, — had
for my antagonist

Somebody whose name's a secret — you'll
know why — so, if you list,

Call him Cook o' the Walk, my scarlet son
of Mars from head to heel!

Play commenced: and, whether Cooky fan-
cied that a clerk must feel

Quite sufficient honor came of bending over
one green baize,

I the scribe with him the warrior, guessed
no penman dared to raise

Shadow of objection should the honor stay
but playing end

More or less abruptly, — whether disin-
clined he grew to spend

Practice strictly scientific on a booby born
to stare

At — not ask of — lace-and-ruffles if the
hand they hide plays fair, —

Anyhow, I marked a movement when he
bade me 'Cut!'

"I rose.

'Such the new manoeuvre, Captain? I'm
a novice: knowledge grows.

What, you force a card, you cheat, Sir?'

"Never did a thunder-clap

Cause emotion, startle Thyrais looked with
Chloe in his lap,

As my word and gesture (down I flung my
cards to join the pack)

Fired the man of arms, whose visage, simply red before, turned black.
When he found his voice, he stammered
'That expression once again!'

"Well, you forced a card and cheated!"

"Possibly a factor's brain,
Busied with his all-important balance of accounts, may deem
Weighing words superfluous trouble: *cheat* to clerkly ears may seem
Just the joke for friends to venture: but we are not friends, you see!
When a gentleman is joked with, — if he's good at repartee,
He rejoins, as do I — Sirrah, on your knees, withdraw in full!
Beg my pardon, or be sure a kindly bullet through your skull
Lets in light and teaches manner to what brain it finds! Choose quick —
Have your life snuffed out or, kneeling, pray me trim your candle-wick!"

"Well, you cheated!"

"Then outbroke a howl from all the friends around.
To his feet sprang each in fury, fists were clenched and teeth were ground.
'End it! no time like the present! Captain, yours were our disgrace!
No delay, begin and finish! Stand back, leave the pair a space!
Let civilians be instructed: henceforth simply ply the pen,
Fly the sword! This clerk's no swordsmen? Suit him with a pistol, then!
Even odds! A dozen paces 'twixt the most and least expert
Make a dwarf a giant's equal: nay, the dwarf, if he's alert,
Likelier hits the broader target!"

"Up we stood accordingly.
As they handed me the weapon, such was my soul's thirst to try
Then and there conclusions with this bully, tread on and stamp out
Every spark of his existence, that, — crept close to, curled about
By that toying tempting teasing fool-finger's middle joint, —
Don't you guess? — the trigger yielded. Gone my chance! and at the point

Of such prime success moreover: scarce an inch above his head
Went my ball to hit the wainscot. He was living, I was dead.

"Up he marched in flaming triumph — 't was his right, mind! — up, within
Just an arm's length. 'Now, my clerkling,' chuckled Cocky with a grin
As the levelled piece quite touched me, 'Now, Sir Counting-House, repeat
That expression which I told you proved bad manners! Did I cheat?'

"Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and, this moment, know as well.
As for me, my homely breeding bids you — fire and go to Hell!"

"Twice the muzzle touched my forehead
Heavy barrel, flurried wrist,
Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice: then.
'Laugh at Hell who list,
I can't! God's no fable either. Did this boy's eye wink once? No!
There's no standing him and Hell and God all three against me, — so,
I did cheat!"

"And down he threw the pistol, out rushed — by the door
Possibly, but, as for knowledge if by chimney, roof or floor,
He effected disappearance — I'll engage no glance was sent
That way by a single starer, such a blank astonishment
Swallowed up their senses: as for speaking — mute they stood as mice.

"Mute not long, though! Such reaction, such a hubbub in a trice!
'Rogue and rascal! Who'd have thought it? What's to be expected next,
When His Majesty's Commission serves sharper as pretext
For . . . But where's the need of wasting time now? Naught requires delay:
Punishment the Service cries for: let disgrace be wiped away
Publicly, in good broad daylight! Resignation? No, indeed!
Drum and fife must play the Rogue's March, rank and file be free to speed

Tardy marching on the rogue's part by ap-
pliance in the rear
— Kicks administered shall right this
wronged civilian, — never fear,
Mr. Clive, for — though a clerk — you bore
yourself — suppose we say —
Just as would beseem a soldier?

“Gentlemen, attention — pray!
First, one word!”

“I passed each speaker severally in re-
view.
When I had precise their number, names
and styles, and fully knew
Over whom my supervision thenceforth
must extend, — why, then —

“Some five minutes since, my life lay —
as you all saw, gentlemen — 170
At the mercy of your friend there. Not a
single voice was raised
In arrest of judgment, not one tongue —
before my powder blazed —
Ventured “Can it be the youngster blun-
dered, really seemed to mark
Some irregular proceeding? We conjecture
in the dark,
Guess at random, — still, for sake of fair
play — what if for a freak,
In a fit of absence, — such things have been!
— if our friend proved weak
— **What’s** the phrase? — corrected for-
tune! Look into the case, at least!”
Who dared interpose between the altar’s
victim and the priest?
Yet he spared me! You eleven! Whoso-
ever, all or each,
To the disadvantage of the man who spared
me, utters speech 180
— **To** his face, behind his back, — that
speaker has to do with me:
Me who promise, if positions change and
mine the chance should be,
Not to imitate your friend and wave ad-
vantage!”

“Twenty-five
Years ago this matter happened: and ‘tis
certain,” added Clive,
“**Never**, to my knowledge, did Sir Cocky
have a single breath
Breathed against him: lips were closed
throughout his life, or since his
death,

For if he be dead or living I can tell no
more than you.
All I know is — Cocky had one chance
more; how he used it, — grew
Out of such unlucky habits, or relapsed, and
back again
Brought the late-ejected devil with a score
more in his train, — 190
That’s for you to judge. Reprieval I pro-
cured, at any rate.
Ugh — the memory of that minute’s fear
makes gooseflesh rise! Why prate
Longer? You’ve my story, there’s your
instance: fear I did, you see!”

“Well” — I hardly kept from laughing —
“if I see it, thanks must be
Wholly to your Lordship’s candor. Not
that — in a common case —
When a bully caught at cheating thrusts a
pistol in one’s face,
I should under-rate, believe me, such a trial
to the nerve!
‘Tis no joke, at one-and-twenty, for a youth
to stand nor swerve.
Fear I naturally look for — unless, of all
men alive,
I am forced to make exception when I come
to Robert Clive. 200
Since at Aroot, Plassy, elsewhere, he and
death — the whole world knows —
Came to somewhat closer quarters.”

Quarters? Had we come to blows,
Clive and I, you had not wondered — up he
sprang so, out he rapped
Such a round of oaths — no matter! I’ll
endeavor to adapt
To our modern usage words he — well,
‘t was friendly license — flung
At me like so many fire-balls, fast as he
could wag his tongue.

“You — a soldier? You — at Plassy?
Yours the faculty to nick
Instantaneously occasion when your foe, if
lightning-quick,
— **At** his mercy, at his malice, — has you,
through some stupid inch
Undefended in your bulwark? Thus laid
open, — not to flinch 210
— **That** needs courage, you’ll concede me.
Then, look here! Suppose the man,
Checking his advance, his weapon still ex-
tended, not a span

Distant from my temple, — curse him! —
quietly had bade me, 'There!
Keep your life, calumniator! — worthless
life I freely spare:

Mine you freely would have taken — mur-
dered me and my good fame
Both at once — and all the better! Go, and
thank your own bad aim

Which permits me to forgive you! 'What
if, with such words as these,

He had cast away his weapon? How
should I have borne me, please?

Nay, I'll spare you pains and tell you.
This, and only this, remained —

Pick his weapon up and use it on myself. If
so had gained ²²⁰

Sleep the earlier, leaving England probably
to pay on still

Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at
the Frenchman's will."

"Such the turn," said I, "the matter takes
with you? Then I abate

— No, by not one jot nor tittle, — of your
act my estimate.

Fear — I wish I could detect there: courage
fronts me, plain enough —

Call it desperation, madness — never mind!
for here's in rough

Why, had mine been such a trial, fear had
overcome disgrace.

True, disgrace were hard to bear: but such
a rush against God's face

— None of that for me, Lord Plassy, since I
go to church at times,

Say the creed my mother taught me!
Many years in foreign climes ²³⁰

Rub some marks away — not all, though!
We poor sinners reach life's brink,

Overlook what rolls beneath it, recklessly
enough, but think

There's advantage in what's left us —
ground to stand on, time to call

'Lord, have mercy!' ere we topple over
— do not leap, that's all!"

Oh, he made no answer, re-absorbed into
his cloud. I caught

Something like "Yes — courage: only fools
will call it fear."

If aught

Comfort you, my great unhappy hero Clive,
in that I heard,

Next week, how your own hand dealt you
doom, and uttered just the word
"Fearfully courageous!" this, be sure, and
nothing else I groaned.

I'm no Clive, nor parson either: Clive's
worst deed — we'll hope ex-
cused. 24

EPILOGUE

In regard to the third verse of this poem the
Pall Mall Gazette of February 1, 1890, related
this incident: "One evening, just before his
death-illness, the poet was reading this from a
proof to his daughter-in-law and sister. He
said: 'It almost looks like bragging to say
this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the
simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand.'"

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-
time,

When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where — by death, fools
think, imprisoned —

Low he lies who once so loved you, whom
you loved so,

— Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mi-
taken!

What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the
unmanly?

Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I
drivel

— Being — who?

One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worse than
wrong would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight
better,

Sleep to wake.

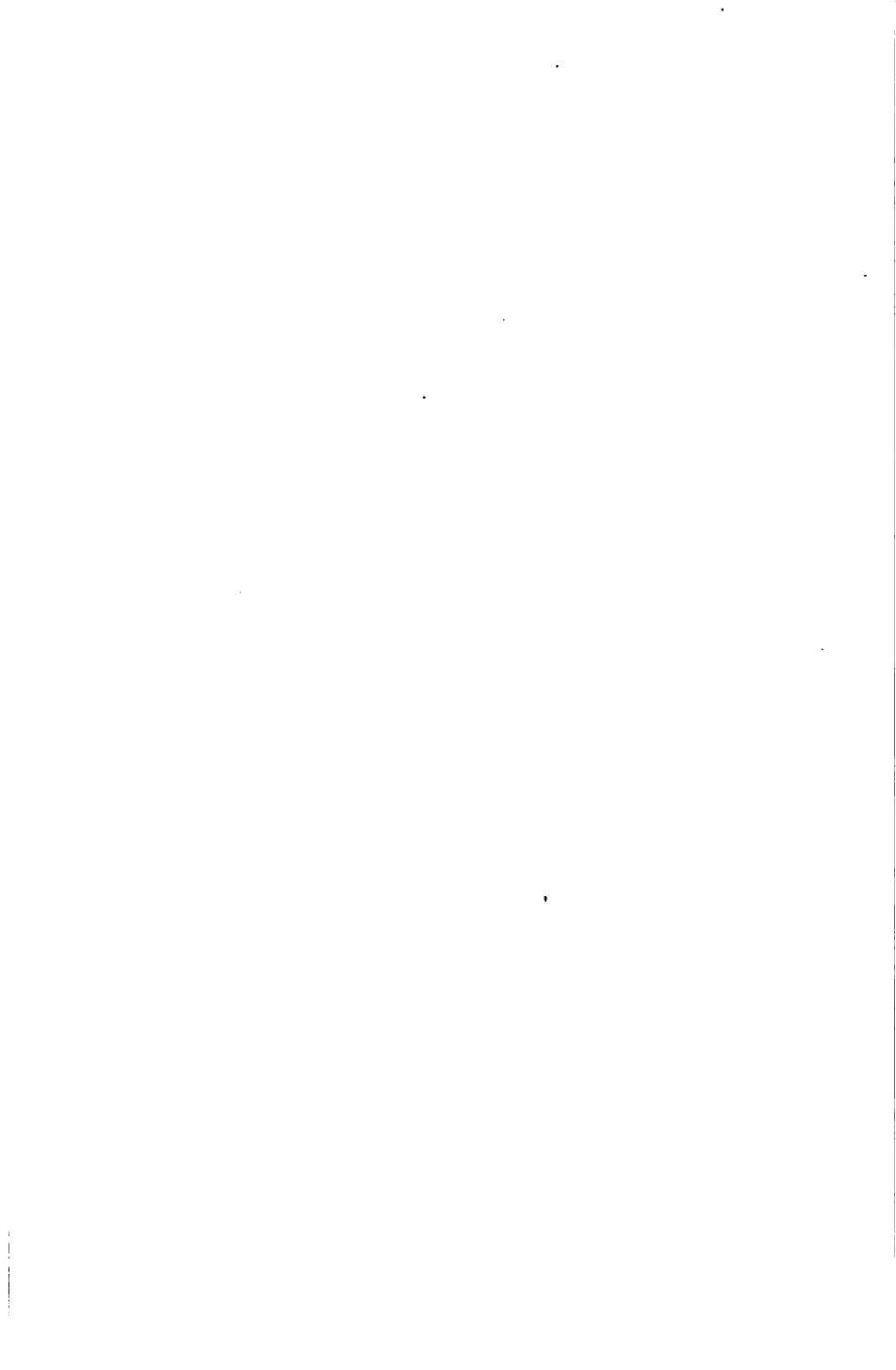
No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-
time

Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either
should be,

"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed, — fight
on, fare ever

There as here!"

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

ENGLAND in the fourteenth century presented the spectacle of a people not amalgamated, not unified in language, customs, or feeling. The descendants of the Norman conquerors held themselves aloof from the natives, treating the latter as of inferior clay. By social distinctions, by laws, by exactions of enforced and unrewarded labor, and by grinding taxes the court and the nobility kept down the English and exalted the French element in the nation. Thus the ordinary contrasts between the classes in human society were accentuated by the difference in blood. It was a time of profuse extravagance among the rich and of pinching necessity among the poor. In full knowledge of the poverty through the realm, kings poured forth the public monies on profitless foreign wars, or strutted in the pageantry of outworn chivalry and wasted huge sums in reviving the pomp of tournaments and of the fabled Round Table. Richard II could set an example of carelessness and extravagance by paying thirty thousand marks for a new cloak while his unhappy people were starving in a succession of harvest failures or were being decimated by the ravages of the plague. Upon a few occasions the general discontent found expression. William Langland embodied in his *Complaint of Piers Plowman* his realization of the social injustice and the widespread misery of the time. John Ball, the "mad priest of Kent," stung the peasants to revolt by his violent attacks on the social order and by his rude couplet:—

" When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman ? "

In this fourteenth century England of such sharp contrasts, such extravagance on the one hand and such misery on the other, was born, about 1340, Geoffrey Chaucer. Of the details of his life we know little. His father, it seems, was a vintner of Thames Street, London, and a man of wealth and importance. He succeeded in having Geoffrey installed as a page in the household of Elizabeth, wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence. Thus Chaucer from a very early age became a part of the courtly class. The importance of this fact upon his literary work was immeasurable. In all his poetry we find little reference to the political or social wrongs of the time. He saw life from the point of view of men of his class.

A few years later he seems to have accompanied Edward III on the French campaign, for in March of 1360 we have a record of the king paying sixteen pounds for Chaucer's ransom. In modern value, sixteen pounds would be worth all of one thousand dollars, so we can judge that Chaucer, or the Chaucer family, must have been of some importance in the world.

Again consulting the royal records, we find in 1366 a pension granted to Philippa Chaucer and, in 1381, the payment of this pension "to Geoffrey Chaucer, her husband." Putting the two notes together, Chaucerian scholars have deduced that about 1366 Chaucer married Philippa, a lady in waiting to the Queen. Further precise knowledge of the character or family of Philippa, or of the married felicity of Chaucer, is not obtainable.

Geoffrey Chaucer seems to have been successful in his attendance upon the royal wishes, for in 1367 we have a record of the grant of a pension to him of twenty marks a year for life, equivalent in purchasing power to-day to about eight hundred dollars. A year later his services were further recognized by his promotion to be an Esquire of the Royal Household.

His rise in importance continued. In 1369 he again accompanied the king with the army in France. In 1370 he was entrusted with a secret mission abroad, the exact nature of which has remained unknown to this day. In 1372 he was sent to Genoa to conclude certain commercial arrangements. From Genoa he went to Florence, where he may have met Petrarch and

Boccaccio, and where he certainly became acquainted with the works of Dante, who had died more than a half-century before. In 1374 he was granted a further mark of royal favor in a daily pitcher of wine from the royal stock. In 1375 he was appointed controller of customs for wool, etc. in London, was allowed from John of Gaunt and his wife an additional pension of ten pounds a year (worth at present values about six hundred and twenty-five dollars, and was appointed ward of a certain Edmund Steplegate of Kent. In 1376 and 1377 he was employed apparently by the influence of John of Gaunt, on various secret missions abroad. In 1382, he was appointed controller of petty customs in London. In 1386 he entered Parliament as one of the Knights of the Shire for the County of Kent.

Chaucer's income at this time must have been large, yet the records show that he must have lived up to the last penny of it. On a temporary loss of royal favor due to the ascendancy of the Duke of Gloucester over the king, Chaucer was removed from both controllerships and was soon driven to the money-lenders. Although he was later again in the royal good graces after the fall of Gloucester, he seems never to have been prosperous. Apparently the long practice of extravagant habits rendered it impossible for him to retrench. We find him occupying various offices from 1390 on. We find a record in 1394 of a royal pension of twenty pounds a year for life (equivalent to about one thousand five hundred dollars); we know that in 1398 he received an additional allowance of a tun of wine a year for life, and yet in the same year he did not dare to leave his house for fear of arrest for debt, and in 1399 Chaucer addressed an appeal to the new king for financial assistance. Henry IV granted him an additional forty marks a year pension, bringing Chaucer's total pension annual income up to more than three thousand dollars of our money. Encouraged by this prospect, he rented, December 24, 1399, a new house in London for a term of fifty-four years.

In this new house which he had entered apparently with such pleasant anticipations, he died October 25, 1400.

The actual list of official positions and the accuracy with which we can establish Chaucer in these positions lend a fictitious appearance of completeness to any sketch of his life. Of the man himself, of the intimate details of his person and character, of the formative influences that surrounded him in his youth and moulded him in his manhood, we know practically nothing. He moved in the upper stratum of the luxurious society of the period, he was a courtier all his life. he was accustomed to disregard expense and to look for royal favor to pay his debts, and yet he was evidently a man of recognized judgment and ability, obviously a polished gentleman and a witty companion. These general deductions from the statistics of the court records are all that we can positively assert with regard to him.

It is marvelous that in such a busy official life as Chaucer undoubtedly led he should have had the time to make such a notable contribution to English poetry. And more wonderful still is the evidence that in the midst of this busy life he should project such ambitious poetical schemes. It is a peculiarly human trait in Chaucer that he planned so much more than he could possibly accomplish. To a sympathetic and understanding reader, Chaucer's many unfinished works possess a unique interest in the mute testimony they offer to his nature.

So much for the bare skeleton of Chaucer's life — would that we might clothe it with flesh and blood and present the very man. We turn now to the imperishable poems he has left behind him.

At the time when Chaucer began to write, poetry did not exist in English. The poetic literature from the time of the Norman Conquest reflected the continual conflict between the old Anglo-Saxon forms and the newer Anglo-Norman forms. *Piers Plowman* in the old alliterative meter was the last brilliant flash of the Anglo-Saxon verse, coming just at the time when Chaucer was beginning his career. The Anglo-Norman writers had done scarcely more than direct the attention of the reader across the Channel to the home of a more advanced literature: their work in English was contemptible.

Under these circumstances, with no models in English, Chaucer took the most natural course. He turned to the French and Italian literature for his models, translating, imitating, and para-

phrasing during a long apprenticeship, trying in English the different verse forms, tuning his harp for an original composition. Indeed one of our earliest of contemporary references to Chaucer is to a translation: "Thou art in Albion the God of worldly love," wrote the French poet Eustace Deschamps, "and into good English thou didst translate the book of the Rose." The *Romaunt of the Rose* referred to by Deschamps is the most prominent work of Chaucer's early period, but in a number of adaptations and imitations he showed how he was trying his hand. He accepted the continental models, the courts of love, the dream, the machinery of romance and chivalric love, and experimented with them in English form. His *Book of the Duchess*, *Parlement of Foules*, *House of Fame*, and *Legend of Good Women* are examples of this period.

A more noteworthy work of his apprenticeship was his *Troilus and Criseyde*. Although this, like the poems mentioned above, was after a continental model, Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, it was neither a direct translation nor a paraphrase. Chaucer deliberately altered elements of the story to increase its artistic finish. He followed the narrative plot of Boccaccio, but he borrowed from various other sources — Guido della Colonne and Boethius, especially — to heighten the dramatic quality and impart a moral character to the tale. His characters are different: Troilus is more heroic, Criseyde is more interesting, Pandarus is more individual. He showed great independence in his selection from and in his treatment of his original, expanding Boccaccio's 5704 lines into a poem of 8246 lines. In short, he indicated by this poem a tendency to break away from his models and compose his own setting.

Romaunt of the Rose, *Parlement of Foules*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and the rest, however, are but introductions to his *Canterbury Tales*. On these his fame as one of England's greatest poets rests. The conception is not wholly original, — collections of tales, reaching a climax in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, were not uncommon in those times, — but it was a happy genius that imagined a company setting out on the spring pilgrimage to Canterbury, and agreeing to tell stories to while away the hours. In such a pilgrimage might be gathered representatives of all the ranks and grades of contemporary society, and the variety of setting as the cavalcade passed from place to place could enhance the interest of the whole. A more ideal framework could scarcely be imagined.

It is a pity that so little of the whole plan was completed. From the Knight through his son the Squire, and the Abbot, the Parson, the Scholar, the Clerk, the Prioress, the Doctor, the Cook, the Plowman, the Sailor, each of the twenty-nine pilgrims (including Chaucer himself) was to tell four tales, two on the outward and two on the homeward journey. The tales were to be connected by the narrative of incidents of the pilgrimage, giving an opportunity for a lively depiction of the characters, their quarrels, their remarks on the stories, etc. Only twenty-two tales were completed, and two more are left to us in a fragmentary state. Between some groups the connecting links are omitted. And yet in these fragments of a great plan Chaucer revealed himself as a true artist and poet. The pilgrims become living people, the scene along the Canterbury road is spread before our eyes: — the jovial, profane Harry Bailly, the low and churlish Miller, the quarrelsome Friar and Summoner, the Canon's Yeoman riding his sweating horse to join the pilgrimage, all become so real that we long to place the day and hour of each man's tale. Chaucer's descriptions of dress and appearance, his command of a delicate satire, his ability to fit the story to the character, mark him a creative artist.

Judging him by his greatest work, then, we shall rank Chaucer first in time and high in place among English poets. His genius was essentially narrative: he was our first gifted short-story writer. His characterization, his plot, his climaxes are of the short-story type. His manipulation of scene and incident has the dramatic quality of the short-story form. He leaves with us always the impression of a man who dearly loved living people. He is cheerful. This world, with all its faults, hypocrisies, sins, is yet a good world — at any rate, he knows no better. Though he never rises to the sublimity of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, his scenes have the interest and freshness of early morning. He is indeed the dawn of a national English poetry.

EDMUND SPENSER

ELIZABETH, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, succeeded to the throne of England upon the death of her sister, Mary, November 17, 1558. The curiosity of historians has exploited her weaknesses. She was to the end of her life inordinately vain, drinking in without qualms the most fulsome flattery; she was at times as undignified as the lowest peasant in her realm, as when she flaunted her flirtations before the court or cursed like a fishwife in the council chamber; she was without religious feeling; she was the past-master of diplomatic duplicity; she was devoid of a sense of gratitude, as was shown, for example, when she allowed Walsingham, who had sacrificed his whole fortune for her sake, to spend his last days in abject poverty. These are but a few of the charges an able chronicler of her time can bring against Elizabeth. To offset these, however, her virtues and successes redeemed England from a state of degradation and raised it to the highest pinnacle of fame throughout Europe. She was masculine in her undaunted courage and tenacity of purpose; she had rare intuitive skill in selecting her counselors, so that those who sat about Elizabeth's council board represented the ablest men in the kingdom; her personal religious indifference gave England peace when in the great rival countries persecution was the order of the day; her conscienceless mendacity enabled her to outwit the shrewdest diplomatists of Europe at a period when intrigue and duplicity were synonymous with statecraft; her love of splendor and parade actually raised her in the love and esteem of her loyal subjects; her wide range of intellectual interests and her directness of vision and finesse of conversation, made her the center of the most brilliant court of the time in the world. She wholly dominated her environment. Her long reign, from 1558 to 1603, is rightly designated as the Elizabethan age, whether we write of economic progress, political progress, or literary progress.

In Elizabethan England literature flourished. The thrill of a new renaissance inspired the poets. The growth of the nation in power and wealth fostered the increase of a keenly intelligent leisure class able to appreciate and willing to support literature of all kinds. Prose, poetry, and drama of a kind unexcelled in our history abounded. The Elizabethan is really the golden age of English letters. Foremost among the poets of the period was Edmund Spenser. He was acknowledged in his own lifetime to be first among the English poets, and in common literary judgment to-day, he ranks with Chaucer, Milton, and Wordsworth as among the greatest in our history.

In a discussion of the facts of Spenser's life we are confronted with a condition very like that met in the discussion of Chaucer: — we can gather from official records a number of dry dates and we can supplement these by a few autobiographical references in his poetry, but in the end the intimate nature of the man eludes us. We cannot place his birth-date or birthplace exactly; we face a disagreement in the exact date of his death; we have never learned the name or character of the northern lass the love of whom had for a long time a marked influence on his work and we know only the most sensational events of his long sojourn in Ireland.

Edmund Spenser was born in London about the year 1552, six years before the accession of Elizabeth to the English throne. He was thus of about the same age as Raleigh (b. 1552), Hooker and Sidney (b. 1554), and Bacon (b. 1561). His father, John Spenser, was apparently a clothmaker or tailor and a member of the great and influential London Guild of Merchant Tailors. His father's membership in the Guild enabled Edmund to be admitted to the excellent Merchant Tailor's School in the city. It is certain that his family was not wealthy, for the records of the expenditures of a certain Robert Nowell, a rich and charitable London citizen, are extant, containing items advanced to "Edmund Spensore, scholler of the m'chante tayler scholl."

In 1569 he entered Pembroke College, Cambridge. Little is known of his college career, but from what we understand to have been the character of the curriculum at that time we can realize how little it fostered the genius of the poet. The college was a hotbed of religious con-

troveray, Calvinism being taught as the only acceptable Protestant doctrine in defiance of the ritual of the established Anglican Church. Roman Catholic emissaries were abroad in the land, attacking the rights of the queen and fomenting rebellion against her in favor of Mary Stuart. The university seethed with factional quarrels. Spenser himself seems to have been out of sympathy with the extremes of Puritanism preached by one group at the college and to have accepted a kind of modified Puritanism which allowed him without scruple to enjoy the gayety and gallantry of the social life of the time.

In 1576 he left Cambridge with his master's degree. He seems then to have gone to the north of England for a visit, perhaps to some of the more influential relatives of his family in that part of England. His poetry bears witness to the fact that while he was on this visit he fell passionately in love with one "Rosalind," whose identity has never been disclosed. His suit was rejected, but his love for this unknown "Rosalind" had a great influence upon him and upon his work for many years thereafter.

His career as a man of letters had in a small way begun before this. Even when he was in college he had published verse of unusual polish and fluency. In 1578 he left the north of England for London in the hope of preferment at court. His hope was not entirely unreasonable: he had made a success in Cambridge, he had already published verse of great promise, and his family connections in the country insured him an entrance into the court life. We find him successful in gaining the patronage of the Earl of Leicester, the favorite with the queen, and in making the acquaintance of such gentlemen as Sir Philip Sidney and Lord Strange of court circles. In 1579 *The Shepherd's Calendar* appeared and showed a fulfillment of the promise of Spenser's youth.

It may safely be said that *The Shepherd's Calendar* was the most notable single contribution to English poetry since Chaucer. Framed after the classical models of Theocritus and Virgil, the *Calendar* contains twelve eclogues, one for each month. Of the twelve, three treat of his own futile love, three are upon general subjects, — as old age, the perfect pattern of a poet, and the like, — three are upon religious questions, one celebrates the queen, one is a love poem, and one is an elegy. In his rustic simplicity of diction and style Spenser imitated Chaucer, from whom indeed he professes to have learned his art, but in his models he reflects the great influence of the revival of learning in Europe. This collection of pastoral poems shows a variety and melody of verse and language which set it at once above the works of his contemporaries. It was produced at a time when an example of great poetry was most needed, for the two centuries that had elapsed since Chaucer had been barren. Its effect upon subsequent poetry was marked by the production of many pastorals of a similar style. The influence of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* can be distinctly traced in Milton's *Lycidas*.

Spenser's prospects upon the publication of *The Shepherd's Calendar* must have seemed bright. His patron was a favorite with the queen, his poem had immediately won the favor of the foremost circles of the day, and he had actually made enough money by his publication to render him comfortable for the time. Some strong influence, however, seems to have blocked him. It has been a tradition that Lord Burghley, the treasurer under Elizabeth, opposed his preferment because of his friendship with the Earl of Leicester. All that Spenser procured was the office of private secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton when the latter was appointed Lord Deputy to Ireland in 1580.

To a man of Spenser's tastes, especially when these tastes had been whetted by two years in the polished society of London, continued residence in Ireland was the equivalent of dreary exile from all that was most congenial. He was separated from inspiring contact with the greatest minds of all English literature and set down amid a sullen, rebellious people animated by the bitterest hostility toward the English. Although Spenser seems to have prospered materially in Ireland — was Clerk of Degrees and Recognizances in the Irish Court of Chancery, 1581-88; Clerk to the Council of Munster, 1588 to about 1592; Sheriff of Cork, 1598; received a grant of Kilcolman Castle and three thousand acres about 1588 on which he resided for many years, — we have indisputable evidence that he did not consider himself happy. He made

repeated trips to London, ostensibly to arrange for the publication of the separate parts of *The Faerie Queene*, but equally for the purpose of seeking preferment in London, and in a poem written near the close of his life we find him referring to himself as one

whom sullen care,
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
In Princes Court, and expectation vagues
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away
Like empty shadowes, did afflict my braynes.

Prothalamion, 5-9.

Spenser's greatest work, *The Faerie Queene*, was begun about 1580. By 1589 three books were completed and Spenser made a protracted visit to London to present them to the publisher and to have them brought to the queen's attention. We can imagine what an oasis this must have been in Spenser's life. Again he was in the midst of the society of London, a more brilliant society than ever before; again his poetry gained immediate favor; again his hopes for preferment must have risen high. It is not too much to suppose that on this trip Spenser made the acquaintance of the young but popular Shakespeare. Spenser had in Ireland cultivated the friendship of Sir Walter Raleigh and may have met Shakespeare through Raleigh's influence. or, Spenser being under the patronage at this time of the Earl of Essex and Shakespeare under that of the Earl of Southampton, their respective patrons may have brought them together. It is interesting to think of these two poets, one immortal in all literature and the other recognized as of the highest rank in English literature, meeting in those great days of England.

Spenser's stay in London lasted about two years. In 1591 we find him back again at his post in Ireland. A few years later begins the love recorded in more than eighty *amoretti*, or sonnets. In June of 1594 his love was crowned by marriage with Elizabeth Boyle, and his joy at his success was expressed in the glorious *Epithalamion*. A year later he again journeyed to London, probably with his wife, to arrange for the publication of another section of *The Faerie Queene* and to seek preferment. This visit lasted less than a year and, so far as preferment was concerned, was as futile as his former attempts. He returned to his estate in Ireland in 1596.

The closing days of his life were peculiarly terrible. In 1598 one of the rebellious mobs attacked Kilcolman Castle and burned it to the ground. It was rumored in London that in the fire one of Spenser's children was burned alive. Spenser fled, ruined financially and broken in spirit by his loss. Again he went to London, where, either at the end of 1598 or in the early days of 1599, he died in poor lodgings. Ben Jonson is reported by Drummond to have said: "That the Irish having rob'd Spenser's goods, and burnt his house and a little child new born he and his wyfe escaped: and after, he died for lack of bread in King Street, and refused 20 pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, and said, He was sorrie he had no time to spend them."

The original inscription on the tomb in Westminster Abbey read as follows: "Heare lyeth (expecting the second comminge of our Saviour Jesus) the body of Edmond Spenser, the prince of poets in his tyme, whose divine spirit needs noe other witnesse than the work which he left behinde him, he was borne in London in the year 1552, and died in the year 1599."

In a dramatic age, Spenser stands out as the one great non-dramatic poet. Removed by fortune from the influences of the English court life to the cold and uninviting environment of Ireland, he there wove the figures of his imagination into poetry. He claimed Chaucer as his father in poetry, as was the fashion with many poets of the fifteenth century, but he is radically different from Chaucer. Chaucer's poetry is of the open air, fresh, bright, clear, direct, active. Spenser's is of the drawing-room, polished, refined, dreamy, imaginative. Chaucer was master of the story-teller's art, contrived his situations with dramatic foresight and carried on his plot with vigor and speed; Spenser often lost himself in the succession of rich images that floated before his mind; his story lapsed while he dreamed. Spenser is truly the poet who appeals to

poets more than to the general reader. To the latter, accustomed to rapidity of plot and interesting complication of incident, the poem soon becomes tedious: the reader reads so much and goes such a little way on his journey. But to the poet, the exquisite harmony of the language and the richness of the pictures sustains the interest to the end. No English poet has been gifted with a more fertile imagination or with a more delicate ear. "He has had more idolatry and imitation from his brethren," says Leigh Hunt, "than all the rest put together. The old undramatic poets, Drayton, Browne, Drummond, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, were as full of him as the dramatic were of Shakespeare. Milton studied and used him, calling him the 'sage and serious Spenser'; and adding, that he 'dared be known to think him a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.' Cowley said that he became a poet by reading him. Dryden claimed him for a master. Pope said he read him with as much pleasure when he was old, as young; Collins and Gray loved him; Thomson, Shenstone, and a host of inferior writers, expressly imitated him; Burns, Byron, Shelley, and Keats made use of his stanza; Coleridge eulogized him; and he is as dear to the best living poets as he was to their predecessors. Spenser has stood all the changes in critical opinion; all the logical and formal conclusions of the understanding, as opposed to imagination and lasting sympathy."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND has the honor of contributing one name to the trio of world poets, Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. In depth of vision, fullness of sympathy, perfection of art, and universality of appeal, in short, in all the characteristics of a true poet, these three stand foremost.

William Shakespeare was baptized in the little church of his birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon, April 26, 1564. He was probably two or three days old at the time, so that the date of his birth can be placed with considerable certainty as April 23, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, at the time of Shakespeare's birth seems to have been a well-to-do trader in farm produce of Stratford, a man of considerable importance in the little town, being High Bailiff in 1568; his mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a landowner in the neighboring village of Wilmcote.

Of Shakespeare's youth and education, we know very little. He would naturally attend the schools of the town and receive the usual drill in Latin grammar and literature, studying Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Seneca, etc. We have evidence from the records of the town to show that when Shakespeare was about ten years old his father's good fortune ceased and John Shakespeare began to sink into hopeless financial difficulties. It is fair to presume that under these circumstances the boy was taken from school to help the family fortunes. This presumption coincides with the statement of a contemporary (Aubrey, d. 1697): "I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbors that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade."

Our next certain knowledge of Shakespeare is of his marriage in the autumn of 1582 to Anne Hathaway, a woman about eight years older than he. She was the daughter of a farmer of Shottery, a near-by village. May 26, 1583, Shakespeare's first child, Susanna, was baptized in Stratford, and February 2, 1585, his twin children, Hamnet and Judith.

Some time between 1585 and 1587 Shakespeare left Stratford for London and was temporarily wallowed up in the maelstrom of the city life. When he emerged in 1592, it was as a rising young dramatist.

The reasons for his leaving Stratford cannot be known with any certainty. A credible tradition states that he was prosecuted for deer-stealing in the park of the great landowner of the district, Sir Thomas Lucy, and retorted by lampooning the knight. The prosecution being hereupon pressed with extra rigor, Shakespeare was forced to flee from Stratford. There is nothing inherently improbable in this tradition, and yet we have no evidence to prove it a fact. It first appeared in full in Rowe's account of Shakespeare's life in 1709, almost a century after Shakespeare had died. If we disregard this legend, we can find logical reasons for Shakespeare leaving Stratford in the love for play-acting inspired by seeing in Stratford during his young manhood, the King's Company, the Earl of Worcester's Company, and other companies of

actors, and in a natural desire to try his fortunes in the great London world when his father's failures made a prospect of success in his little village doubtful.

London could not at first have looked kindly on a boy in his early twenties coming from a small country village. Such a boy would be left to starve or to fight his way as best he could. Tradition relates that his first work was as holder of horses at the theater entrances. Goldsmith alludes to an early existence among the Axe Lane beggars, but no other foundation for this statement is known.

By 1592 Shakespeare had become a member of an acting company of recognized reputation and was actually engaged in writing plays or patching up old plays for his fellow actors. We have a contemporary record to prove that his success thus early had inspired jealousy among his fellow playwrights. Robert Greene (d. September, 1592) refers to "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to humbust out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his conceit the only Shakescene in a countrie . . ." The expression "Tygers heart," etc., occurs in *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* and in *3 Henry VI*. The point of the attack on Shakespeare (alluded to in *Johannes Factotum* and *Shakescene*) lies in the reference to his being used to work over old plays for his company.

From this period his progress was rapid. In 1594 he and his company played before the queen; the dedication of his poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* shows that he had come under the patronage of the Earl of Southampton; his acting company became in 1594 the Lord Chamberlain's Company, and later, in 1603, His Majesty's Company; and from 1595 on a steady stream of pirated editions of his plays and poems, and in some cases of plays or poems never written by him, testifies to his popularity. Numerous contemporary references support the evidence just mentioned.¹ For example, Francis Meres in his *Wit's Treasury* (*Palladis Tamia*, 1598) wrote: ". . . the sweete wittie soule of *Ovid* lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued *Shakespeare*; witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, etc. As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latines, so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage. . . ."

It is probable that in the years of Shakespeare's success his thoughts often turned back to his boyhood home. His father's affairs had become more and more involved. The records show that John Shakespeare was deeply in debt and was sued in the courts on various occasions. Even before Shakespeare had left Stratford for London, his father had lost by the foreclosure of mortgages certain farms in the near-by villages of Snitterfield and Ashbies, and by the beginning of 1586 he had no property which could be attached for debt. Suddenly, in 1596, the lawsuits stopped, so that we are led to believe that the successful son in London went to his father's aid. This deduction is further supported by the known fact that in the same year the father applied to the College of Heralds for the grant of a coat of arms. Three years later, 1599, an application for an "exemplification" of the Shakespeare coat of arms was successful, and John Shakespeare became John Shakespeare, Gent., bestowing, of course, the same distinction on his son.

The researches of Professor Charles William Wallace have unearthed from the documents of the Public Record Office of London a number of papers bearing on a lawsuit in which Christopher Mountjoy, Shakespeare's landlord in London, was defendant and Shakespeare himself witness. From these papers we learn that Shakespeare boarded with the Mountjoys within five minutes' walk of St. Paul's Cathedral in a highly respectable neighborhood during the years (about 1598 to 1604) when he wrote his greatest plays.

Evidence of Shakespeare's prosperity during this period, in fact during his whole life from 1594 on, is not lacking. Besides his income as an actor and a playwright, he was, from about 1599, a shareholder in the Blackfriars Theater and in the Globe Theater. These investments were very profitable, probably amounting to as much as five hundred pounds a year. The

¹ Cf. *Shakespeare Allusion Book*. J. Munro, Editor. London, 1909.

records show also a number of legal and financial transactions involving sums of considerable size. At the height of his career Shakespeare may have had an income of more than twenty thousand dollars a year, reckoning according to the purchasing power of money to-day. In 1597 he purchased New Place, at that time the finest residence in Stratford. In 1602 he bought one hundred and seven acres in Old Stratford; in 1605 he bought the right to farm the Stratford tithes; in 1610 he bought the Combe estate. He, "in his elder days," writes Ward, "lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for that had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of a thousand a year, as I have heard." —

The Stratford records have preserved for us some knowledge of events which must have strongly affected his life during these years. In 1596 Hamnet, his only son, died at the age of eleven years; in 1601 his father died; in 1607, his eldest child, Susanna, was married to John Hale, a doctor; in 1608 his mother, Mary Arden Shakespeare, died; in 1616, February 10, his daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, a vintner.

Shakespeare seems to have retired wholly from London circles and interests toward the close of his life. It is conjectured that about 1611 he sold his shares in the theater and went to live as a country gentleman of wealth in Stratford. In his house, March 25, 1616, he signed his last will and testament. And there he died April 23, 1616, and two days later was buried in the chancel of the little Stratford church. Over his remains is a flat dark tombstone with the inscription: —

Good frend, for Jesus sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heare:
Blesste be ye man y^t spares thes stones,
And curst be he y^t moves my bones.

Shakespeare's main work was done in the field of the drama and his great fame rests upon the insight, breadth of sympathy, and power of expression he displayed in that field. Extracts from his plays, poetic though such extracts may appear, yet lose something of their force and pertinency by being plucked from their context. We have chosen, therefore, to represent Shakespeare's poetry by a few lyrics selected from those sprinkled through his comedies and by a baker's dozen of his Sonnets.

Meres in 1598 wrote of Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends." Altogether there are preserved to us 154 Sonnets. The series from number 1 to 126 seems to have been addressed to a man, and from 127 to 154 to a woman. Scholars have sought to interpret the story of the Sonnets as autobiographical, but, although some of them seem to point to real incidents in his life, most of them were probably written in accordance with the sonnetteering fashion of the day. The few that we have selected in the text were chosen because of their inherent nobleness of thought and beauty of expression rather than because of their possible autobiographical interpretation.

ROBERT HERRICK

THE luxury and splendor of the Elizabethan age, based on a proud consciousness of increasing wealth and power and held within bounds by a wise queen, decayed rapidly under Elizabeth's immediate successors. Vice and profligacy came to the fore with few redeeming traces of genius, until with a remarkable convulsion the whole rotten system was swept aside for a while and replaced with the austerities of Puritanism. The literature that had reflected so brilliantly the life and spirit of the Elizabethan age, reflected later the corruption of the Jacobean and Caroline ages that followed. The drama, through which medium the greatest geniuses had expressed themselves, went to the last extremes in portraying the contemporary ways of life and thought and was finally checked by the closing of the theatres by the Puritans. Even persons of no Puritan cast of mind must agree that the check was necessary.

Although with the accession of the Puritans to power, the whole character of government,

society, and literature seems to have undergone a *volte-face*, it was undoubtedly a fact that England remained at heart deeply devoted to its royalist ideals. The memories of English glory and renown were too recent and too intimately bound up with royalty to be extinguished at once. In literature of the day the majority of names is made up of Cavalier poets, in whose opinion the happy phrase or the quick turn of thought in a short lyric was but an accomplishment of the cultivated gentlemen. We have, then, side by side with the stern Puritan writers, at whose head stood Milton, a group of talented, polished gentlemen whose work in literature has survived to the present day. Lovelace, Suckling, Carew, Davenant, Herrick, all belong to the Cavalier poets; their lives were bound up with the royalist cause and their poetry reflects their ideals.

Greatest of the poets of these sympathies was Robert Herrick. In the period when the drama was decaying, Herrick developed the lyric to heights never before reached and seldom since surpassed; removed by fate from the political struggles that preceded Charles's execution and settled in a little Devonshire pastorate, he spent his time in writing his little songs to imaginary *inamorata*. With the delicate artistry of a goldsmith, Herrick was carving cherry-stones, while his contemporary Milton was adorning the Doric and Ionic columns of literature. Says Swinburne: "The last of his line, he is and will probably be always the first in rank and station of English song-writers. We have only to remember how rare it is to find a perfect song, good to read and good to sing, combining the merits of Coleridge and Shelley with the capabilities of Tommy Moore and Haynes Bayly, to appreciate the unique and unapproachable excellence of Herrick."

Robert Herrick, born in London and baptized August 24, 1591, was a descendant of a family well known in Leicestershire from early in the fourteenth century. His grandfather, John Eyrick, or Herrick, was a freeman in Leicester in 1535 and later was twice the Lord Mayor of the town; his father, Nicholas Herrick, was a goldsmith of London who died November 9, 1592, fifteen months after the poet's birth, from the effects of a fall from an upper window. Nicholas Herrick left an estate which realized upwards of £5000, which in modern values would equal about £30,000. Robert, with the other children, was left by the terms of his father's will to the guardianship of William Heyrick (Herrick), his uncle, one of the wealthiest goldsmiths of the time.

Of Herrick's youth we know little for certain. Frequent references to "beloved Westminster" have led to the belief that he was educated at this school. In 1607, when he was sixteen years old, he was bound apprentice for ten years to his uncle, then become Sir William Herrick.

The indentures of his apprenticeship were apparently waived later by his uncle, for we have record of his matriculation as a fellow commoner at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1614. A number of letters from him to his uncle, written during his residence at college, are extant. Most of them are requests for remittances, as, for example:—

Sir, my dutie remember to yourself and Lady; the cause essentiall is this: That I would entreat you to paye to this bringer to Mr. Adrian Marius, bookseller, in the Black Friers, the some of XL. The which my tutor hath receaved, to be payde at London . . . Your ever obsequious, R. Hearick.

CAMBRIDGE, 11th of October.

And again:—

. . . The essence of my writing is (as heretofore) to entreat you to paye for my use to Mr. Arthour Johnson, bookseller, in Paule's Churchyard, the ordinarie sume of tenn pounds, and that with as much sceleritie you maye, though I could wish chardges had leaden wings and tortice feet to come upon me; *sed votis puerilibus opto*. . . Thus I salute your vertues.

CAMBR., April, 1617.¹

HOPEFULL R. HERRICK.

¹ From letters selected by Mr. Nichols and published in his *History of Leicestershire*.

Herrick's university career must have been marked by extravagance. He seems to have had a quarterly allowance of £10 (value now about £80) and to have received on several occasions substantial help from his uncle; yet we find him leaving St. John's for Trinity Hall with the avowed purpose of curtailing his expenses, and the records show that as late as 1629 he was still in debt £10 16s. 9d. to the college steward. He took his bachelor's degree in 1617 and his master's degree in 1620.

When Herrick left the university and returned to London, his funds must have been restricted. Although Nicholas Herrick had left a goodly fortune, its division between his wife and seven children left comparatively little for each child. Furthermore, Robert Herrick's tendencies at the university indicated that, as soon as the restraining influence of his "careful" uncle was removed, any fortune he might have would soon be dissipated. An occasional reference in his poems shows that he appreciated financial help from his patrons, as: —

To the Patron of Poets, Mr. End. Porter

Let there be patrons; patrons like to thee,
Brave Porter! Poets ne'r will wanting be:
Fabius, and Cotta, Lentulus, all live
In thee, thou man of men! who here do'st give
Not only subject-matter for our wit,
But likewise oyle of maintenance to it. . . .

Just what year Herrick took holy orders is not known. It was a natural career for a university-trained man, and yet Herrick was hardly the type we should expect in a pulpit or pastorate. He may have adopted the career in the expectation of speedy preferment. He had influential friends at court, Pembroke, Westmoreland, Edward Norgate and others; his poems for New Year anthems had been set to music by the most notable composer of the day, Henry Lawes; he may have been known personally to the king.

In 1629, apparently upon the recommendation of the Earl of Exeter, Herrick was presented by the king to the vicarage of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. Although the annual value of the living was only £50 (about £300 in modern value), the elevation of the previous incumbent, Dr. Potter, to be Bishop of Carlisle may have inspired high hopes in Herrick's breast.

These hopes were never realized. After Herrick had settled in the little Devonshire pastorate, he seems to have been forgotten by his associates at court. The evidence afforded by many of his poems shows conclusively that he was discontented with his lot, and yet he did not, like Spenser, make repeated journeys to London in search of royal favor. For nineteen years he lived a bachelor life in the secluded village. His household consisted of one old servant, Prudence Baldwin by name, a pet dog, a goose, a hen, and a tame pig which he had taught to drink beer out of a tankard. Donald Mitchell draws rather a gross picture of him: "This Robert Herrick was a ponderous, earthy-looking man, with huge double chin, drooping cheeks, a great Roman nose, prominent glassy eyes, that showed around them the red lines begotten of strong fumes of Canary, and the whole set upon a massive neck which might have been that of Helioabalus." As a pastor he was acceptable, although he never seems to have done more than his routine duties. Tradition records that upon one occasion he hurled his sermon at the heads of his little congregation, cursing his listeners for their inattention.

It is characteristic of man to complain of his lot, so we should not take too seriously Herrick's comments upon "dull Devonshire," the "rockie" and "rude" Deanbourne River near by, and

A people curriah; churlish as the seas;
And rude, almost, as rudest salvages.

It is certain that Herrick did much of his best work while he was at Dean Prior. His interest was aroused by the quaint semi-pagan customs of the villagers, he loved the Morris-dances, the wakes, the Twelfth-Night revels, and he celebrated these in his verse. Steeped as he was in classic poetry, permeated with the spirit of Anacreon, Horace, Martial, Tibullus, and the rest, Herrick succeeded in creating in his imagination an Arcadian paradise from his Devonshire village environment.

In 1648 the Puritans, recognising Herrick's royalist sympathies, removed him from his vicarage. He went at once to London, prepared to rejoin his old companions and congenial wits. He hailed his release from the dull routine of the Dean Prior pastorate with joy; he referred to the time of his residence therein as "a long and dreary banishment."

At London he dropped his clergyman's title and garb, and became Robert Herrick, Esquire. Tradition has it that he was at this time in abject poverty, subsisting on the charity of his friends, but it seems improbable that his many wealthy relatives would have allowed him to come to such a pass. At any rate, it is certain that he undertook at this time the arrangement and publication (1648) of his poems under the title *Hesperides; or, The Works both Human and Divine of Robert Herrick*. The "Divine" works which formed a part of the published volume were entitled "Noble Numbers." He had previously, in 1635, contributed some verses to a *Description of the King and Queen of Fairies*, and a record has been found, date April 29, 1640, of "The severall poems written by Master Robert Herrick"; but these are lost to us, and we must take it for granted that they are included in the *Hesperides* volume. Herrick did not show in his poems a wide range, but in the pastoral lyric he is unsurpassed. He has left in his single publication that is known to us about thirteen hundred poems, all of them very short, many of them but a single couplet. A number of them are worthless as poetry and a few are coarse, vulgar, rude, and repulsive, but some — and after careful selection it is astonishing how many these are — are gems of purest ray. He has portrayed with sure art the quaint aspects of English country life: —

I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides and of their bridal cakes.

And again his short love lyrics reach in delicacy and fervor heights that have never been excelled.

After the publication of this volume, the details of Herrick's life for fourteen years are lost to us. We have some indications that his poems were well received by the Cavalier partisans, for many of them were set to music by the most prominent composers of the day, Lawes, Lanier, Ramsay, and Wilson. The fact that he had been ejected from his vicarage because of his royalist sympathies, too, must have given him a certain popularity. Until the first days of the Restoration, however, we have no record of where he was or of what he was doing, or of how he lived. Then, in August of 1662, Herrick, seventy-one years old, was restored to his vicarage at Dean Prior, displacing the Puritan sympathizer, Dr. Symes, who fourteen years before had taken the vicarage.

Again his life is closed to us. Biographers have vainly tried to unearth some details of his remaining years at Dean Prior. Certain it is that nothing more came from his pen. We are left to imagine his bachelor household, the servant, the dog, the goose, the hen, and the famed pig that drank out of a tankard. Our sole remaining exact information is obtained from the parish register, as follows: —

Robert Herrick, Vicker, was buried
y^e 15th day October, 1674.

JOHN MILTON

ALTHOUGH the excesses of rigor that marked the abrupt change from Caroline government to the Puritan Commonwealth were the work of but a few fanatics, these excesses have stamped indelibly upon the minds of succeeding generations the Puritan characteristics. We still lay stress, as Macaulay did, upon "the ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements." And Milton, who has become to many the typical representative of his age in literature, has suffered in character as a result of our impressions and prejudices. Stedfast of purpose, noble in life, dignified in mien, learned in the Scriptures he was, but without

ostentation or vain pride, and with no peer in human learning, — as for example in a knowledge of the classics, — or in an appreciation of such polite amusements as music and poetry.

Of Milton's life we know much more than of the lives of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, or Herrick. John Milton was born in London December 9, 1608. His father, John Milton, was a wealthy London scrivener or notary, endowed with a rare taste in art, poetry, and music, and himself a composer whose tunes were admitted to the best contemporary collections. His mother, Sarah Jeffrey, was one of the two orphan daughters of a London "citizen and merchant-taylor." Of her Milton once wrote: "A most excellent mother and particularly known for her charities through the neighborhood."

The little home in Bread Street, London, with which Milton's life until he was sixteen years old was closely associated, was one well adapted to foster the development of his genius. The noblest of moral precept and example was combined with the artistic tastes of his music-loving father and with the strict classical training required for entrance to the university. Milton himself in later years bore witness to his father's influence over his studies: "Both at the grammar school and also under other masters at home he caused me to be instructed daily." His training he absorbed with an assiduity very unusual in a child. Naturally serious in temperament, he set for himself even in boyhood rigorous standards of thought and conduct. At the age of twelve he rarely left his books before midnight.

At sixteen he matriculated at Christ College, Cambridge, where he spent the next seven years of his life, four years studying for his B.A. degree and three for his M.A. There he continued his studious life and apparently became inspired with the idea that he should prepare himself for some notable creation in poetry. In certain Latin epistles to his friend Charles Diodati, then at Oxford, he referred to his ambitions; and he wrote a number of Latin poems and several English poems which stand out notably above the work of his college mates. The English poems of this period include *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, the sonnets *On Shakespeare* and *On his being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three*. Most remarkable of these is the *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, which, though diffuse and marked with conceits inherited from the influence of John Donne, shows in passages the inspiration of an original genius.

It was the hope of Milton's father that Milton would take holy orders upon the completion of his studies at Cambridge, but the young poet's nature rebelled against the restraints imposed thereby. In later life he expressed his convictions on the subject: "The church, to whose service by the intention of my parents and friends I was destined as a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal . . . I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." He was referring to the system which Archbishop Laud was establishing and maintaining in the Church of England. Milton, therefore, left Cambridge in 1632 with his master's degree, but with no definite profession. In his sonnet *On his being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three*, written shortly before he left college, he refers to his fixed hope of future accomplishment: —

... Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

The next few years were among the happiest of Milton's life. His father had in his seventieth year retired from business and settled in the little village of Horton, a short distance from Lon-

don. Here Milton stayed in seclusion, absorbed in serious study and thought. His father readily fell in with his ambitions and Milton went through a systematic study of the Greek and Latin classics, of mathematics, music, and the science which we might now term cosmography. His poetical works were few but very choice — the fragment, *Arcades*, written at the request of Henry Lawes to be put to music for an entertainment; the more elaborate masque, *Comus*, again written at the musician Lawes's request, to be played by the children of the Earl of Bridgewater; the two fine rural idylls *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*; and the magnificent *Lycidas* written for a little volume of commemorative verse gathered by the friends of Edward King, who in 1637 was drowned in the Irish Sea. His time was not wasted. To his friend Diodati he wrote: "I am growing my wings for a flight."

In 1638 Milton left Horton for a continental tour. He spent most of his time in Italy where he was received cordially in the literary circles of the period. In Florence, Rome, and Naples he tarried for months, enriching his mind by his contact with art and literature and society. An especially noteworthy incident of his trip was his meeting in Florence with Galileo, at the time still held in confinement by the Inquisition. Milton's original plans seem to have included Greece and Palestine, but the news of King Charles's expedition against the Scotch led him to cut his journey short. He had too keen an insight into the political situation not to realize the importance of the struggle developing between the king and the people, and too sharp a conscience to allow himself to be absent from England at such a time. "The sad news of civil war in England," he says, "called me back; for I considered it base that, while my fellow-countrymen were fighting at home for liberty, I should be travelling at my ease for intellectual culture."

The twenty years that followed Milton's return from Italy in 1639 were years of struggle and bitterness, both in his public and his private life, and years in which to all outward appearances the springs of poetic inspiration were choked within him. The poet of promise who had written *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, and *Comus* as a warrant of great things in the future, who had told his friend Diodati that he was growing "his wings for a flight," who had impressed the Italian circles with his poetic genius, became notable in England and in contemporary Europe by the fierceness of his Latin invective in polemic pamphlets and books. Poetry was laid aside to enable him to plunge into the politics of the time with all the power of his pen. His zeal in the performance of what he believed to be his duty and his undoubted success in what he did cannot but be admired, but to-day these efforts that cost him years of labor and his precious eyesight are all waste product.

Immediately upon his return from Italy he emerged into public attention by his pamphleteering. Between 1641 and 1643 he fulminated against the Episcopal church government in five pamphlets. His unhappy marriage inspired another series advocating divorce for incompatibility of temper. The death of the king and the shocked and stunned public inspired one of the most notable of his prose works, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, and, coming at a time when the Commonwealth most needed defenders, earned him the office of Latin Secretary to the Council of State. The *Defensio Regia* of the noted Latinist Salmasius inspired Milton's long *Defense of the English People* and involved him in a tedious literary quarrel. He was warned that his failing eyesight could not stand the strain, but with a belief in the great importance of his cause he persisted until he was entirely blind. He continued in his office, however, aided by deputies, and wasted his strength in long Latin messages to foreign powers up to the very close of Cromwell's reign. He was dismissed by General Monk in April, 1659, and a few months later when the king returned, Milton went into hiding to save his life. The Act of Oblivion allowed him to emerge, a blind man over fifty years old, to take up the aspirations of his young manhood.

Even more sharp in their effects upon the man must have been the unhappiness of his private life during these years. In May of 1643 he wooed and won Mary Powell, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a gay Cavalier squire. A few months sufficed to show them both that they had made a great mistake. The light, careless girl could not bear the atmosphere of seriousness and

quiet in which Milton was accustomed to live, and Milton on his part could not appreciate the whims and fancies of his young wife. Even before their honeymoon was well over, she fled to her parents' home and refused to return to Milton. Although later a formal reconciliation took place and she resumed her position in his house, the unhappiness of their married life must have weighed cruelly on them both. Of their marriage, three girls and a boy were born, the boy dying in infancy and the girls surviving to maturity. In March of 1646, Milton's devoted father died and was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate. Milton's love for his father was intense and his acknowledgment of his father's care was always spontaneous and complete, so that this death must have affected him strongly. In 1652 his wife died, leaving him with three small girls. Although their married life had long been loveless, her death must have made some strong impression upon him. The gradual approach of blindness during these years made him helpless, a condition from which a man of such strong nature might especially suffer. In 1656 he married again, a Katherine Woodcock, of whom nothing is known except the testimony of Milton's fondness in his sonnet *On his Deceased Wife*, written after her death in 1657. In 1658 and 1659 the Commonwealth was tottering to its fall and all that Milton had done must have seemed to him lost. He dictated and published a perfect frenzy of pamphlets, remaining to the last true to his principles and trying to check by arguments at times almost incoherent in their earnestness the rising tide of royalism. June 16, 1659, an order was issued by the House of Commons for his arrest, and a few months later two of his pamphlets were burned by royal decree.

The fall of the Commonwealth spelled for Milton the ruin of what he had for twenty years labored to support. The loss of three fourths of his fortune and of his office of Latin Secretary could not have affected a man of his nature so much as the overthrow of all that structure which politically, socially, and religiously represented his ideal. With singleness of purpose and devotion of heart and mind he had spent twenty years of his life and had irretrievably destroyed his eyesight in the support of the Commonwealth, and suddenly, within a single year, this Commonwealth was swept away and replaced by the open and shameless evils of the Restoration. It was a bitter and disappointed man who turned from a consideration of the wreck of his hopes to pick up the threads of his youthful ambitions of twenty years before.

He then threw all the energy of his strong nature into the work of poetry. *Paradise Lost* had been planned and actually begun before the fall of the Commonwealth, but his work upon it had been subject to continual interruptions. He resumed the composition of that poem. To overcome the terrible handicap of blindness he hired attendants to read to him and trained his daughters to pronounce for him the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages in which so much that he needed was written. His trials were severe. His daughters, forced against their will to the daily task of reading, gradually lost their natural feelings of respect and love. They conspired with the servants to cheat him at the market, they secretly sold his books, they deserted him when he most needed them, they stooped to every mean and petty device to escape their hated tasks. Milton is, of course, not blameless in this sordid picture, for the tasks he imposed upon them were wholly unsuited to the character and abilities of the girls. The domestic tragedy was closed about 1663. Milton in that year married Elizabeth Minshull, a capable, active woman of twenty-five who devoted herself to making him comfortable. Shortly afterwards the daughters, for whom conditions had become unbearable, were sent forth to learn embroidery as a means of earning their livelihood. Few people visited the gloomy house and those few — as Andrew Marvel and Thomas Ellwood the Quaker — he often utilized to read to him or to write from his dictation. Through such unhappiness as this he pressed on to the completion of his epic. In the spring of 1665 he handed the manuscript to Ellwood, "bidding me take it home with me, and read it at my leisure, and when I had so done, return it to him with my judgment thereupon."

Paradise Lost was published by Samuel Symons, printer, and the contract, April 27, 1667, between poet and publisher is still preserved in the British Museum. Milton was to receive five pounds down, a second five when the first edition of thirteen hundred copies was exhausted, a

third five when the second edition was exhausted, and a fourth five when the third edition was exhausted. The first edition was in the hands of the public in the autumn of 1667. At the time of his death, Milton had actually received ten pounds under this contract.

It is conventional to cite the reception of Milton's epic as an example of the neglect accorded to a great work upon its appearance, but the sale of thirteen hundred copies of such a poem in less than a year and a half shows a reasonably wide circle of readers. Its publication restored his fame among a generation with whom he had become almost a stranger. His house became the resort of the notables of the time, his group of friends broadened, his eminence as man of letters and poet was acknowledged.

In the mean while, he did not cease from his labors upon the publication of *Paradise Lost*. A remark of Ellwood when he returned the manuscript to the poet — "Thou hast said much here of *Paradise lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise found*?" — is said to have started him upon the composition of *Paradise Regained*. This sequel to *Paradise Lost*, together with *Samson Agonistes*, was published in the autumn of 1670.

His years were numbered now, but his work continued, although, except for the editions of his early poems, he published no more poetry. He issued his Latin letters to his foreign friends, he labored over a *Compendium of Theology*, a *History of Britain*, and a new type of geography textbook. He could not bear to be idle.

His life during these latter years was simple. His daughters had left him in 1669 and the modest household consisted of himself, his wife, a single maidservant, and an amanuensis who came in by day. One account tells how Milton "used to sit in a gray, coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house in Bunhill Fields, in warm, sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air; and so, as well as in his room, received the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality"; and another tells us how he "rose commonly in the summer at four, and in the winter at five in the morning. . . . At his first rising he had usually a chapter read to him out of the Hebrew Bible; and he commonly studied all the morning till twelve." It was a quiet, sober, regular household in which Milton passed his last years.

Milton died November 8, 1674, of gout. He was buried on the 12th in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, beside his father.

JOHN DRYDEN

A few years before Milton's death, he was visited by a young poet of rising renown who requested Milton's permission to put *Paradise Lost* into rhyme for public performance as an opera. Milton granted the request with a contemptuous, "Yes, you may tag my verses." This meeting between John Milton and John Dryden has a peculiar interest in setting before us the sharp contrast between the aged giant of an age that had passed and the vigorous young representative of the new age. Dryden's character suffers from the contrast. The stern and inflexibly moral Puritan, faithful to his religious and political principles amid the ruin of all that he had labored to upbuild, compels our admiration, whereas the pliant and morally loose Dryden, with weak political and religious convictions, adapting himself to the changing spirit of his time, lays himself open to charges of hypocrisy and time-serving.

John Dryden was born in the little village of Aldwincle, in Northamptonshire, August 9, 1631. His family was a notable one in the country, his grandfather being Sir Erasmus Dryden, Bart., and his mother, Mary Pickering, the daughter of the Reverend Henry Pickering, pastor of Aldwincle All Saints'. His childhood was passed amid Puritan influences, for both his father's and mother's family sided with the Parliament.

Of his youth we know little. He studied at the famed Westminster School in London and matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1650. We catch only two fleeting glimpses of him at college, on one occasion when he was disciplined for "disobedience" and "contumacy," and on another when he received his bachelor's degree in 1654. There is some ground for believ-

ing that he did not look back with pleasure upon his own university career, for in later years he seems actually to have preferred Oxford to his own university: —

Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
Than his own mother university.

Dryden's father died in 1654 and Dryden's share of the estate has been estimated to have yielded him the equivalent to-day of a thousand dollars a year. He was thus, at an early age, freed from the fear of starvation while he sought to make a place for himself in literature.

Dryden left the university some time between 1654 and 1658 and went to London. His family's politics and the ascendancy of Cromwell would naturally lead the stranger to ally himself with the Puritans, and we know that at first he was under the patronage of his uncle, Sir Gilbert Pickering, a great favorite with Cromwell, and that upon Cromwell's death he actually wrote his notable heroic stanzas on the *Death of His Late Highness Oliver, Lord Protector*. His sojourn in London as a bookseller's hack, however, threw him into contact with men of royalist sympathies. The prominent writers of the day were all Cavaliers. Hobbes, Cowley, Herrick, Denham, the fickle Waller, and the preëminent Davenant all looked forward to a restoration of literary taste with a restoration of Charles. Dryden's religious and political convictions, never apparently very deep, speedily succumbed to his environment and he celebrated the return of Charles in three poems (*Astræa Redux, To His Sacred Majesty, To My Lord Chancellor*) between 1660 and 1662.

By birth, by nature, and by education Dryden was fitted to associate with the aristocracy of the time, and his change of politics threw him among the Cavalier nobles. His status was fully established by his marriage, in 1663, to Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of a royalist earl. Dryden never refers to his wife with any special marks of affection, and he is known to have carried on a long intrigue with the actress Anne Reeve, but there is no decisive proof that the marriage and his mode of life were different from those of other men of fashion in his age. Three sons were born of this marriage and survived to maturity.

Dryden made his bid for literary fame in the field of the drama, not apparently because he felt a special inspiration toward that literary form, but because he foresaw with the return of Charles a demand for plays. For twenty years, until 1681, he wrote almost solely for the stage, achieving great success. His *Conquest of Granada* and *All for Love* stand foremost among the plays of their respective types. During this period he also produced his greatest prose works of criticism, of importance now, not because of the principles set forth, but because of the prose style. In his critical essays is found the beginning of modern clear vigorous simple prose.

His success during these years established his fame and financial position on seemingly sure foundations. He was elected (1662) a member of the Royal Society; he was, at the king's recommendation, given the degree of Master of Arts by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1668; he became (1668) a shareholder in the King's Company, agreeing to supply to the company three plays a year; he was appointed (1670) Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal; he was given a pension of one hundred pounds a year; he was recognized throughout England as the most eminent man of letters of the day, and must have been in receipt of an annual income equivalent to-day to fifteen thousand dollars. His personal associates were among the most conspicuous literary men of the court circles.

At the age of fifty, Dryden turned from the field in which he had achieved his success to write poetry. In the dedication to *Aureng-Zebe* (1676) he hints at the change: "I never thought myself very fit for an employment where many of my predecessors have excell'd me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy. Some little hopes I have yet remaining, and those, too, considering my abilities, may be vain, that I may make the world some part of amends for many ill plays, by an heroic poem." The "heroic poem" to which he alludes was never written, but upon the poetry which he produced after 1680 rests his reputation to-day as one of the leading English poets.

According to tradition, Dryden received from Charles personally the encouragement to take

up the cudgels of party strife in England. Party feeling was intense. A great Popish plot had been unearthed in 1678; the Whigs, led by the Earl of Shaftesbury, stood in opposition to the Tories, led by Charles himself; the question at issue was the English throne, the Whigs favoring the exclusion of the Duke of York for the Duke of Monmouth, and Charles using his influence and French subsidies to favor his brother, the Duke of York. Civil war seemed imminent. In March of 1681 Charles dissolved the Oxford Parliament and appealed to the nation. On the charge of high treason the Earl of Shaftesbury was arrested and confined in the Tower of London. In November his case was taken up by the London grand jury. Just a week before the decision in Shaftesbury's case appeared Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, the finest political satire in English. Absalom represented the Duke of Monmouth, Achitophel was Shaftesbury, and Zimri was the Duke of Buckingham.

Dryden's entrance into politics was the signal for attacks by the Whig writers. Envy had been busy with his career before, but partisanship added a new sting to the utterances of the poetasters. Goaded by the scurrilous lines of a former friend, Shadwell, Dryden in the autumn of 1682 published *MacFlecknoe*, in which he pilloried Shadwell before the London world as the heir to the abilities of a dull and stupid Irishman by the name of Flecknoe. For biting satire this short poem has no equal. Shadwell lives in literature to-day by virtue of Dryden's attack.

In sharp contrast to the violence of these satires appeared from Dryden's pen in 1682 *Religio Laici*, a defense of the doctrines of the Established Church from the layman's standpoint. This didactic poem, called by Scott one of the most admirable poems in English, was written in a style very effective for its purpose, simple and almost conversationally easy-going. Its view of religion is that of the ordinary Englishman. Its arguments are not novel or deep, it shows no grand inspiration or power of thought, but it reveals a kindly, honest nature endowed with much sound common sense.

It is curious that this worldly poet and man of letters should have lived to be fifty before his interest in the pregnant political and religious problems of his time developed, but our wonder is stirred by the versatility of the man in his poetic treatment of them. In his youth and young manhood he had written a few poems; then for twenty years he devoted himself to the stage, and when over fifty he turns to political and religious discussion and produces unrivaled satirical and didactic poetry.

February 6, 1685, Charles II, Dryden's patron and friend, died, and James II, an avowed Catholic, took the throne. The influence of the king and of his supporters in spreading Catholicism reached Dryden among the first. Never steadfast in his convictions, Dryden was early converted, and in the very year that James acceded to the throne, Dryden professed the Catholic faith. This easy thinker, bred up in Puritan surroundings, converted to the Established Church and the Cavalier movement at the first contact with the London world, now with easy grace adopted the professed faith of the new court circles. Excuses a-plenty have been offered for him, — for example, lack of any real religious emotion and hence a failure to attribute any importance to the change; sincere conversion to Catholic tenets as proved by his not changing back to the Established Church after the Revolution of 1688, — but they are not convincing. The stigma of time-serving has clung to Dryden to this day.

A curious immediate literary result of his conversion was the long poem *The Hind and the Panther* (April, 1687) in which the gentle Catholic Church (the Hind) discusses divinity with the fierce Church of England (the Panther). The contrast of attitude between this poem and the *Religio Laici*, published five years before, brings inevitably to mind the somewhat similar contrast at the beginning of his career between his verses to Cromwell and his subsequent welcome to the restored Charles.

To a certain extent Dryden's character was retrieved by the events following the Revolution of 1688. His well-known professed Catholicism caused him to be deprived of all the official positions and pensions he had enjoyed under Charles II and James II. He had the bitterness of seeing the laureateship pass to Shadwell, whom he had held up to ridicule in *MacFlecknoe*. He himself, living the life of his circle, had saved nothing. At the age of fifty-seven he was

thrown wholly on his own resources. He naturally worked the harder with his pen to earn his livelihood.

His chief productions of these latter years are his translations and his fables. No man was better fitted than he to render the Latin classics into English verse. Juvenal, Persius, selections from Ovid, and the complete works of Virgil kept him engaged until 1697. His work was the success that was to be expected. His translation of Virgil is still the standard.

In 1700 he published *Fables, Ancient and Modern*. These were tales from Chaucer and Boccaccio paraphrased in modern English. The success of this book was immediate. *Theodore and Honoria*, paraphrased from Boccaccio, has been assigned a high place in poetry.

With this triumph Dryden's career closed. On May 1, 1700, only a few months after the publication of the fables, he died. With appropriate ceremony he was buried in Westminster Abbey near the graves of Chaucer and Cowley.

In poetry, Dryden was preëminent as a satirist, and it is by his poetry that he ranks to-day as the greatest man of letters of the Restoration period. In his plays, notable as they are, he is matched by a number of his contemporaries; in his odes and occasional poems he is far excelled by the poets of the Romantic movement, but in his satires he is without a rival in English literature. His perfection of versification, its variety now vigorous and epigrammatic and again easy and flowing; his attitude of studied and polished contempt, not bursting with an assumed righteous indignation like the classical Romans, but marked with the cool scorn of a superior to his inferior; his careful identification of individual and type, thus losing nothing of the personal bite and force and gaining much of dignity and perpetual interest; his mastery of invective; his manipulation of argument — these qualities raise *Absalom* and *Achitophel* and *MacFlecknoe* into a class by themselves.

ALEXANDER POPE

ALEXANDER POPE was born May 21, 1688, the year of the bloodless revolution that placed William of Orange on the English throne. His father, Alexander Pope, was a prosperous linen merchant of London, and, in religion, a staunch Catholic. His mother, Edith Turner, was one of the seventeen children of a Yorkshire gentleman. The child inherited from his parents, who were forty-six years old at his birth, the double curse of a deformed body and a feeble constitution. Throughout his whole life his career was marked by the morbid sensitiveness to praise or blame and by the nervous irritability of temper that so often accompany physical weaknesses or peculiarities.

Pope's youth and education were strongly affected by his family's religious faith. Catholics were at the time forbidden public worship, were barred from public office, and were socially handicapped. As a child of Catholic parents, Pope could not have the benefits of the great schools of England. Eton, Westminster, and the like were closed to him, and the universities likewise. He was taught for a while by a priest, for a while in a small private school in London; but from a very early age he educated himself by omnivorous reading, lightly in philosophy, theology, and the languages, deeply in literature and poetry.

His ambition to be a man of letters, a poet, was fully formed at a very early age, and developed with no deviations through his whole life. His ultimate triumph was an example of the power of intellect over physical, political, and social obstacles. He rose to be the acknowledged poet of England, the man whose work was the dominating influence in his time.

The period was really a period of prose. The clear, easy style begun by Dryden flowered in Addison's essays, Swift's satires, Fielding's stories, Gibbon's history, and Burke's speeches. The poetry, in comparison with that of great inspirational ages, seems prosaic. It was witty, clever, ornate, correct, but lacked the enthusiastic fire of the Elizabethan age or the high moral spirit of the Miltonic. The tendency in poetry was toward the didactic and satirical verse rather than the lyrical, the epic, or the dramatic.

Pope's earliest work worth attention was written and published when he was in his teens. These "Pastorals," modeled upon Theocritus and Virgil according to the fast-dying fashion of the time, hardly deserve attention except for the evidence they bear as to their author's precocity. They comply with the poetic conventions and refer to nymphs, and swains, Daphnis, Damon, Sylvia, Delia, Colin, Daphne, etc., but they are artificial forms, cold and uninteresting.

Of far greater importance were the *Essay on Criticism*, written in 1700 and published two years later, and the *Rape of the Lock*, written and published in 1711 and 1712. By these two poems Pope gained at a stroke a commanding place among the poets of his time. The *Essay on Criticism*, was applauded by his contemporaries as a masterpiece. They marveled at the wisdom, taste, and metrical skill of the new poet, as exhibited in this review of the art of poetry as set forth in Horace, Boileau, and the classicists of the 18th century. An unusual number of its lines and phrases have, by their perfection of expression, become a part of our store of aphorisms, as "To err is human, to forgive divine," "A little learning is a dangerous thing," "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," etc.

The second of these early works stands far higher in our estimation to-day. The *Rape of the Lock* is unique in our literature. It is a trifle, to be sure, based on a quarrel between a maid of honor and a courtier who, without permission snipped off a lock of her hair, but the incident is so exquisitely handled, the treatment is so polished, witty, and vivacious that its popularity has persisted. In his long mock-heroic poem, Pope satirizes the court life of the time, revealing the mannerisms of society and giving to us of a later age a lively picture of the card-playing, tea-drinking, dresses, parties, and other frivolities which occupied the days of the society beau and belles.

One other publication of this early period of Pope's development deserves mention. The *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* and *Eloisa to Abelard*, which both appeared in 1717, remain Pope's chief poems of a sentimental type. They are technically perfect, with that same perfection which is one of the most marked characteristics of all of Pope's poetry, and are vivid in their portrayal of pathetic situations. They never, however, rise from pathos to tragedy; it seems as though the artist in Pope overcame the emotional inspiration, for we always seem to discern beneath the cleverly treated situations the moving finger of the author.

Pope's prominence gained by these poems brought him into immediate contact with some of the chief figures of his age. Still a young man — he was less than thirty upon the publication of *Eloisa to Abelard* — he had every prospect of a long, successful, and happy career, but his acutely sensitive nature prevented. His personal history from the first days of his literary renown is a wearisome and disgusting succession of petty squabbles and intrigues. Much can be excused the morbidly irritable cripple, but his character can never be wholly cleared from the meannesses, the vanities, the personal spites and fits of ill-temper, the unworthy jealousies that stain his relations with his fellow authors. He alienated his friends and gave weapons to his enemies by his quarrel with the easy-natured Addison, by his attacks upon the poet Dennis, by his abnormal sensitiveness to well-intentioned criticism, by his shameless falsehoods and subterfuges where he saw an opportunity to increase his reputation for brilliancy or precocity, by his inadequate acknowledgment of the assistance of his collaborators in the translation of the *Odyssey*, by his conspiracy to have his correspondence published and his subsequent attacks upon the publisher. During all the years of his literary supremacy the sordid record of his weaknesses and littlenesses runs parallel.

In the flush of his early success, Pope was encouraged to undertake the great task of rendering Homer into English verse. His friends helped along the subscription list. He took his task with great seriousness and put his best effort into it. The project must have been suggested about 1713 and the last volume of the *Odyssey* appeared in 1726, so that for a dozen years he gave his time undividedly to his work. His success was immediate. Johnson calls the rendering "the noblest version of poetry the world has ever seen," and succeeding critics have acknowledged the force and liveliness of its style. The pecuniary reward which Pope received was enormous

estimated to have been about nine thousand pounds. Being by nature a parsimonious man, he was by this single work established for life in an independent financial position.

Pope was now at the very pinnacle of his fame. Johnson, deriving his information from a "domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life," thus describes his person and habits: "His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid. By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered that his life was a 'long disease.' . . . He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help."

Shortly after the publication of the last volume of his *Homer*, Pope entered the ranks of English satirists with his *Dunciad* (the epic of the Dunces). This poem may have had its inception in a little group of wits comprising Swift, Atterbury, Gay, Parnell, and Pope who formed the Scriblerus Club and planned a monumental satirical work upon stupidity paraded as learning. The club never had any definite organization and, of course, never accomplished its huge purpose: Pope's *Dunciad* is but a small contribution inspired by the original design; Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was another, the greatest issue of the Scriblerians.

The *Dunciad* is a venomous satire upon those of his contemporaries who had antagonized him or failed to appreciate his genius. It is redeemed from oblivion to-day by the pungency, force, and brilliancy of his lines. Though we cannot but regret that a man of such ability should use it in such an unworthy way, we are again and again compelled to admire the courage and force with which he attacks the enemies of genius.

In his *Essay on Man*, written between 1730 and 1734 at the instigation and encouragement of the famous ex-statesman, Bolingbroke, Pope laid himself open to comparison with Milton. His effort was to

vindicate the ways of God to man, —

to put before his readers a harmonious view of the universe. Pope suffers from the comparison he has courted. Milton clothed his justification of the universe in concrete figures and lent life to his poem: Pope, obtaining a logical framework perhaps from Bolingbroke, in prosaic verse elucidates general views of man's relation to the universe, of the nature and state of man with respect to himself as an individual, of the nature and state of man with respect to society, and of the nature and state of man with respect to happiness.

As is the case with his other works, this poem won immediate recognition and renown. Abroad, Voltaire warmly eulogized Pope's philosophy. At home, the poem was accepted widely as the last word in contemporary thought. To-day, we read the *Essay* for the many purple patches, the exquisitely perfect phrases, lines, or couplets that seem the final expression of certain universal ideas; as, —

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of Mankind is Man.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

Of Pope's philosophy, except as it is an embodiment of the feelings and ideas of his time, we take no account.

The poems now known as *Moral Essays* were written at different periods of Pope's life, one as early as 1715, and seem to have been intended to be a part of a very long poem. The *Essay on*

Man was to be the first book; other books were to treat of knowledge, of government, and of morality, and the concluding book was to contain epistles upon the cardinal virtues. As they stand at present, the *Moral Essays* are mere fragments.

Of greater importance during these latter years were Pope's *Satires*. Encouraged by a chance remark of Bolingbroke, that the first satire of the second book of Horace would suit the poet's style, Pope translated it, published it (1733), and achieved immediate success. He followed this with other imitations of Horace between 1734 and 1738.

The *Satires* really show Pope at his best. "The best way of learning to enjoy Pope," says Leslie Stephen, "is to get by heart the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. That epistle is . . . his Apologia. In its some four hundred lines he has managed to compress more of his feelings and thoughts than would fill an autobiography." These satires, especially the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* which is their prologue, do in truth have Pope's usual technical excellence combined with an internal unity which many, indeed most, of his poems lack. Horace and Pope had so much in common that the English poet succeeded beyond others in adopting the former's style. His own sympathies and antipathies warm and vivify the concrete illustrations he introduces. Illusive as some of the references are, they become endowed with interest once they are connected with known experiences in Pope's own life.

Pope's last years were spent at his little villa in Twickenham. Upon the death of his father in 1718, he had acquired this little villa on the Thames, with its grounds of about five acres in extent. The picture of his life there is interesting, illustrating as it does the character and habits of the man. With him was his mother, to whom he was tenderly devoted, and, after about 1730, Martha ("Patty") Blount, long a dearly loved friend. He took an unusual interest in landscape gardening and spent much time in developing his miniature estate according to the artificial tastes of the period. His obelisks, little pseudo-Grecian temples, and fantastic grottoes have aroused the patronizing merriment of critics ever since.

Early in 1744 his feeble body began to show unmistakable signs of the final failure. His friends attended him faithfully; Bolingbroke, Hooke, Spence, Warburton, and the faithful "Patty" Blount waited upon him anxiously. Even on his deathbed he retained the abnormal self-consciousness which had been his through life. "Here I am, like Socrates, dispensing my morality amongst my friends just as I am dying," he said, and, when the suggestion was made that a priest be sent for, "I do not suppose that is essential, but it will look right." On May 30, 1744, he died. On account of his profession of the Roman Catholic faith, he could not be accorded the honor he deserved of a place in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. In deference to his own wish he was buried in a vault in Twickenham Church near a monument erected to his parents.

WILLIAM COLLINS

It is the fashion to-day to rank Collins above his contemporary, Thomas Gray, as the greatest lyric poet of the middle of the eighteenth century. The neglect which he suffered while he was alive is thus atoned by his posthumous fame. The *Persian Eclogues* gained no recognition at their birth, and the *Odes* but little, so we swing the pendulum far the other way and by somewhat of overpraise condemn with the importance of discoverers the lack of taste and discernment of our forefathers.

William Collins was born on Christmas Day, 1721, in the town of Chichester. His family was of some local importance, his father, a wealthy hatter, being mayor of the town. After studying at the prebendal school in Chichester, Collins was entered, in January, 1733, at Winchester College. Even at this early age he began to compose verse, actually publishing at the age of thirteen a sixpenny pamphlet on *The Royal Nuptials*. No copy of this youthful production has been preserved. In his seventeenth year, 1738, he composed the *Persian Eclogues* (later entitled *Oriental Eclogues*), but did not publish them until later. In the mean time (1739)

contributed to *The Gentleman's Magazine* some verses (*To a Lady Weeping*) which excited the admiration of Dr. Johnson.

In 1740 he was admitted as a commoner at Queen's College, Oxford, but in 1741 he entered Magdalen College as a demy, i.e., as a student receiving a certain allowance from the college in return for the prosecution of his studies. During the first years of his college career (1742) his *errant Eclogues* were published, a small volume of four poems containing about three hundred lines, but they attracted little attention at the time. "In his maturer years," records his friend Joseph Warton, "he was accustomed to speak very contemptuously of them, calling them his *rich Eclogues*, and saying they had not in them one spark of Orientalism. . . . He was greatly mortified that they found more readers and admirers than his *Odes*." They are correct according to the metrical standard of the type, but impress us as being somewhat tame and artificial. His fame at the present day does not rest on these.

In November, 1743, he received his bachelor's degree at Oxford, and shortly afterwards published his *Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his Edition of Shakespeare*, being a short review of the progress of poetry from nation to nation, and praising Shakespeare as the greatest of world poets. In 1744 he left Oxford for good. His career there is commonly said to have been marked by "genius and indolence," but his indolence is hardly consistent with his thorough knowledge of the classics and his acquaintance with French, Italian, and Spanish. We know of his affectionate intimacy with the Warton brothers during his college years and of his friendship with Gilbert White. The last-named says: "As he brought with him, for so the whole turn of his conversation discovered, too high an opinion of his school acquisitions, and a sovereign contempt for all academic studies and discipline, he never looked with any complacency on his situation in the university, but was always complaining of the dulness of a college life." Probably, like many other youths, his time was less occupied with the work in the curriculum than with reading and study more to his taste outside.

He gravitated naturally to London, where in the center of literary life he might reasonably anticipate success. He was young, ambitious, energetic, his head filled with large plans, as for example a *History of the Revival of Learning*, a tragedy or two, a version of Aristotle's *Poetics*. He had a small patrimony for his support. Unhappily with his precocious abilities were combined irresolution and a tendency toward dissipation. Of his great projects, none was finished; of the few that were actually begun, none proceeded beyond the stage where a few notes were made. Johnson, who met Collins about this time, records his impressions of the young poet: "His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful. . . . He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of elysian gardens."

Johnson records that during these early years in London, "he wrote now and then odes and other poems, and did something, however little." Apparently his mind was incapable of bending continuous energy to longer compositions than these odes. They remain to-day, these "odes and other poems," the work that has gained him a lasting fame as a lyricist. They appeared December 12, 1746, and won for themselves no general recognition at the time. Tradition records his bitter disappointment at what seemed to be his failure. He burned the unsold copies and threw himself into dissipation and excesses. His ambition disappeared, his indolence and irresolution increased upon him, his strength was undermined. He was raised beyond the danger of poverty by a bequest of two thousand pounds in the will of his uncle, Colonel Martyn, who died in 1749. He left London and returned to live in Chichester with his sister. Only a few other poems issued from his pen — his *Elegy on Thompson* and *Dirge in Cymbeline* in 1749 and the *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* in 1750. He gradually sank into a hopeless state of nervous depression which at times passed into acute insanity.

Collins lived nine years after this. Part of the time he was confined in a madhouse at Oxford and his incarceration there in one of his attacks is sadly related by his friend Gilbert White: "How he got down to Oxford, I do not know; but I myself saw him under Merton wall, in a very affected situation, struggling and conveyed by force, in the arms of two or three men towards the parish of St. Clement, in which was a house that took in such unhappy objects." Disraeli records a tradition that at Chichester "he would haunt the aisles and cloisters of the cathedral, roving days and nights together, loving their 'dim religious light.' And, when the choristers chanted their anthem, the listening and bewildered poet, carried out of himself by the solemn strains, and his own too susceptible imagination, moaned and shrieked, and awoke: sadness most affecting amid religious emotions." The spells of violent madness, however, were relatively infrequent: for the most part he seems to have suffered from such physical weakness as to be unable to pursue any regular occupation. He passed so completely out of the lives and remembrance of the London world that he was deemed by Johnson to have died in 1756, whereas his unnoted death did not actually occur until June 12, 1759.

A few months before Collins's death, Goldsmith had recognized his genius and had sounded his praise. Under this sponsorship, his poetry began to be read and appreciated. Johnson's harsh verdict, "He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants," was revised forthwith. Langhorne, Drake, and Hazlitt contributed their share to raising Collins to the height where he rightly belongs, the long-named drawing the comparison with Gray: "I should conceive that Collins had a much greater poetical genius than Gray: he had more of that fine madness which is inseparable from it, of its turbid effervescence, of all that pushes it to the verge of agony or rapture." His position as one of our first lyric poets seems now secure.

THOMAS GRAY

THOMAS GRAY was born in London, December 26, 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was a scrivener, or money-broker, in comfortable circumstances. He was a moody, irascible man, whose temper when aroused drove him to a condition bordering on insanity. It is conceivable that the lack of poise and balance of the father's character was reproduced in the physical lassitude and settled mental melancholy that oppressed the son through his whole life. Gray's mother, Dorothy Antrobus, belonged to a good middle-class English family. Robert and John Antrobus, her brothers, were Cambridge graduates and, later, tutors at Eton; Anna Antrobus, her sister, had married a prosperous lawyer, Jonathan Rogers.

The circumstances of Gray's childhood and youth were such as to confirm any tendency toward melancholia which he might have inherited. His father took no interest in him, even refused to undertake the expense of his education. The father's attitude made it advisable to remove the child from the house, so that for a considerable part of his boyhood Gray resided at the Antrobus house with his uncle. His mother meanwhile remained with her husband until his death in 1741, although we have evidence that at one time she sought legal advice with respect to possible divorce alleging that her husband "hath used her in the most inhuman manner, by beating, kicking, punching, and with the most vile and abusive language, that she hath been in the utmost fear and danger of her life."

A new and on the whole happier period opened for Thomas Gray when in 1727 he was entered for Eton, his mother paying all the charges. Two of the friendships which Gray formed at Eton had a marked influence on his whole life. Horace Walpole, the son of the Prime Minister, and Richard West, the son of a Lord Chancellor of Ireland, formed with Gray a little triumvirate bound together by mutual sympathies, tastes, and affection. The friendship with West lasted firmly until West died of consumption, June 1, 1742; the friendship with Walpole lasted, with a short interruption, through the whole of Gray's life.

In 1734, Gray went to Cambridge, where he was joined by Walpole a year later. He does not seem to have enjoyed his college career. As a matter of fact, the settled, passive melancholy which was the most common characteristic of all his later life, had already begun to oppress his spirits. In a letter to West, who was at Oxford, he writes: "... Yet neither something nor nothing gives me any pleasure. When you have seen one of my days you have seen a whole year of my life; they go round and round like a blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress and gets some ground: my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four and thirty steps more, I shall be just what I was."

The next important incident in Gray's life was his Continental tour with Horace Walpole. Gray had finished his college career at the age of twenty-two, in 1738, and at that time left Cambridge, apparently with no settled plans for the future. While he was thus drifting, Walpole asked him to go as a companion on a grand tour of the Continent, Walpole to pay all expenses but Gray to retain his entire independence of action. The two friends started on their tour at the end of March, 1739. For nearly two years and a half they ambled delightedly through the most interesting spots in France, Switzerland, and Italy. Grays seems to have been entirely lifted out of his melancholy moods by the pretty frivolities and the constant changes of scene. These months were unquestionably the happiest of his life. The trip was rudely interrupted by a quarrel between the two friends. Walpole has unselfishly assumed the blame, but the real reason probably lies in the too exclusively intimate companionship of two lads in their early twenties over so long a period of time. The quarrel was made up a few years later, in 1744, and the friendship between the two continued firm so long as Gray lived.

Gray reached London after his Continental tour September 1, 1741. Two months later his father died from gout, leaving his fortune seriously impaired by his extravagances. A year later his widowed mother and her sister Mary joined the widowed Mrs. Rogers at Stoke-Pogis in Buckinghamshire. Gray's life henceforward is intimately connected with this house at Stoke-Pogis. The three sisters lived there, and Gray, taking up his regular residence at Cambridge, visited them frequently.

Up to this time Gray's poetical talents had been known only to his few intimate friends. He now, however, began seriously to devote himself to literature. The poets of the time were few. Pope, Swift, and Thomson had finished their greatest works and had only a few more years to live; Young was just beginning his *Night Thoughts*; Collins had published his *Persian Eclogues*, but their value had not been recognized by any one.

The important poems of 1742 were the *Ode to Spring*, the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and the *Hymn to Adversity*. Probably during this same period, too, was begun the famous *Elegy*. The news of West's death had reached him during one of his visits at Stoke-Pogis and had, of course, a profound effect upon his feelings at the time. Possibly the note of sadness that continually recurs in these early poems was not only the result of his own melancholy temperament, but was increased by his sorrow at his friend's untimely death. The *Eton* ode has been the favorite of his odes, expressing, as Gosse puts it, "The regret that the illusions of boyhood, the innocence that comes not of virtue but of inexperience, the sweetness born not of a good heart but of a good digestion, the elation which childish spirits give, and which owes nothing to anger or dissipation, that these qualities cannot be preserved through life." In the second stanza of this ode his sense of personal loss by the death of West is especially evident. The *Hymn to Adversity* in its cold purity of expression and its maintained elevation of style is truly Miltonic. To our retrospective glance, the *Eton* ode and the *Hymn to Adversity* established the fact at once that Gray was the compeer of all the poets of his day.

At Cambridge, Gray indulged his tastes for classical reading and study. He became more and more absorbed in his studies, living the life of a recluse, only vibrating between Cambridge and Stoke-Pogis. He planned great things, but his plans all came to naught. He studied the whole literature of ancient Greece; he planned a critical text of Strabo and actually made some notes for the purpose; he planned likewise a text of Plato, and made notes for it; he thought of a Greek anthology; he intended to publish a text of Aristotle; — all that we have of these projected

works are scattered and almost incoherent notes. He withdrew more and more into himself, wrapped up in his studies, but never arriving anywhere. He passed his thirtieth year; his *Elegy* ode was published, but attracted no attention at the time; he was wholly unknown to fame and perfectly willing so to be.

The year 1750 is notable as the year in which he finished the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. He seems to have laid it aside after beginning it in 1742, and then to have been startled into renewed activity in it by his sorrow upon the sudden death of his aunt, Miss Mary Antrobus, at Stoke-Pogis in November of 1749. After finishing it, he sent it off to Walpole: "Having put an end to a thing whose beginning you have seen long ago, I immediately send it to you. You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a thing with an end to it: a merit that most of my writings have wanted, and are like to want." The enthusiastic Walpole unintentionally caused its early publication by handing it around among his friends until a piratical publication was imminent. Its success was immediate. It went through four editions in two months and eleven within two years, not counting the numerous pirated reprints. Gray had a quixotic objection to earning any money by his poetry, so he gave the copyright to Dodsley, the printer, and never profited himself by the poem's popularity. The *Elegy* has come to be, more than any other one poem, the national English poem. Cheapened though many of its phrases and lines have been by constant quotation, it yet retains as a whole its freshness and appeal. An incident that occurred some years later — September 12, 1759 — tended further to endear it to the English: The young General Wolfe, being rowed along at night from post to post under the Heights of Abraham to see that all was ready for the attack the next morning, recited nearly all the *Elegy* and added, "I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow."

Gray's mother died March 11, 1753. Gray was with her from the first sign of her illness in January till the end came. The effect of her loss was acute. He had been accustomed to the little home at Stoke-Pogis where he loved and was beloved by its three inmates, but with the death of his mother, the chief prop of his affections was gone. Only one of his maternal aunts was now alive, and she, a few months later, was stricken with palsy.

Beginning about 1754, Gray interested himself in a different kind of poetry, namely, odes modeled after the Pindaric plan. These, he well knew, could never be popular as was the *Elegy*; they could appeal only to poets with an intimate appreciation of the classics. He sent the first of these, *The Progress of Poesy*, from Cambridge to his friend Dr. Wharton, December 26, 1754. A second, *The Bard*, grew gradually from 1755 until May of 1757, when the music of the blind harper, John Parry, seems to have given him the needful inspiration to finish it. Horace Walpole printed the two at his private printing-press at Strawberry Hill and Dodsley published them. Their novelty gained them immediate attention and their sustained dignity and beauty gained them applause from the discerning. The multitude took their cue from the reviews and eulogized without truly understanding or appreciating. With a finer insight to-day we recognize their originality and power. No English poet has so excellently adapted the Pindaric structure in English verse and in so doing maintained an equivalent richness in imagery, dignity of expression, and sounding harmony of verse.

Gray was now acknowledged the head of the living English poets, so that it was hardly more than fitting that, upon the death of Colley Cibber at the end of 1757, the laureateship should be offered to him. This honor he refused. Upon his mother's death his financial condition was improved that the laureate's salary was no attraction and he seems to think that he would have felt "awkward" in the office.

In 1759 his Cambridge life was interrupted for three years by the opening of the British Museum. Gray moved to London and reveled in the riches of the collection. He was planning at the time a history of English poetry and, as usual, made copious notes for the work, but like other plans, all this came to naught. All his notes he gave in 1770 to Thomas Warton.

At the end of 1762, Gray applied for the professorship of Modern History and Modern Languages at Cambridge, but was unsuccessful. He returned to Cambridge, however, and resumed

his recluse life there. His only poetical work of note during this period consisted of the few romantic lyrics adapted from Gaelic and Icelandic sources. He seems to have been attracted to the Gaelic and Icelandic early literature in his researches for his projected history of English poetry. The poems are: *The Fatal Sisters* (Norse), *The Descent of Odin* (Norse), *The Triumphs of Owen* (Gaelic), *The Death of Hoel* (Gaelic). The most notable fact about this work of Gray's was his appreciation of these rude ancient originals in an age when such appreciation was rare.

The subsequent years of Gray's life were wholly uneventful. The gout which he had inherited from his father laid him low from time to time; he took several short trips, "Lilliputian travels," he called them, once through the south of England, once to the Scottish Highlands, and once to the Cumberland lake region; he enjoyed his summer vacations in visits with his few friends and intimates; he received, in 1768, without application or endeavor on his part, the professorship he had previously wanted; he wrote, about 1769, his *Installation Ode* (now commonly entitled his *Ode for Music*) for the ceremonies attending the elevation of the Duke of Grafton to the chancellorship of the University. He had become a notable man at Cambridge, but so completely did he withdraw himself from the life and activities of the University that he was scarcely ever seen. Tradition records that, on the rare occasions when Gray issued from his rooms, the students hastily left their dinners to gaze at him, and one time when courtesy compelled him to return a formal call, the college men gathered to see him pass, removing their hats in token of respect.

In 1771, Gray succumbed to the attacks of the gout. The last attack began about the middle of July. About eleven o'clock the night of July 30, he died. He was buried without pomp or circumstance in the vault beside his mother at Stoke-Pogis.

Walpole once wrote in a letter: "He [Gray] is the worst company in the world. From a melancholy turn, from living reclusely, and from a little too much dignity, he never converses easily; all his words are measured and chosen, and formed into sentences; his writings are admirable; he himself is not agreeable." Temple called him "perhaps the most learned man in Europe," and Taine terms him "the morose hermit of Cambridge." He was in truth not an agreeable figure, not one of the well-loved poets of our literature. The complete withdrawal into the world of books forced a separation from the life of men, so that his poems, great as they are, commonly lack humanity and warmth. He was the finished artist in verse, writing *ex cathedra* down to his audience. He had elaborate learning and delicate finesse, but he was without passion. His poetry is the poetry of the intellect and not of the heart.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

We are blessed with an unusual amount of biographical material about Goldsmith. Poor "Noll"! His ungainly figure and pock-marked face, his slow tongue, improvident habits, and thoughtless gayety have been ridiculed enough by his contemporaries. "He was such a compound of absurdity, envy, and malice, contrasted with the opposite virtues of kindness, generosity, and benevolence, that he might be said to consist of two distinct souls, and influenced by the agency of a good and bad spirit," wrote Thomas Davies in his *Life of Garrick*. And yet, he was a member of the Club and consorted on familiar terms with such notables as Garrick, Reynolds, and Fox. The old Doctor was his staunch and loyal admirer, "Bozzy" recording on a number of occasions the high opinions Johnson expressed of Goldsmith's work.

Oliver Goldsmith was born in the village of Pallas (or Pallasmore), Ireland, November 10, 1728. His father, Charles Goldsmith, of English descent, was the Protestant clergyman in the poor little Irish village, and eked out his meager living by farming. His mother was the daughter of the Reverend Oliver Jones, a poor Protestant clergyman settled in a neighboring Irish community.

The Reverend Charles Goldsmith's prospects improved somewhat in 1731, for he was pre-

sented to a living in Ireland worth about two hundred pounds a year. He removed to the village of Lissoy. It is with this village that all of the poet's youthful memories are connected. He attended the village school and gained the reputation of being "a stupid, heavy blockhead," but from the master's inexhaustible fund of stories of ghosts, fairies, witches, and banshees he imbibed a romance that fed his active imagination. His life was not happy, for his squat figure, pock-marked face, and tendency to make ridiculous blunders made him the butt of his school-fellows. In after years he saw Lissoy through the softened haze of memory and it became idealized in *The Deserted Village*. *wood Johnson*

Goldsmith's father, unable to pay his son's tuition at college, was not inclined to encourage the boy's continuance in his education, but on the advice of an uncle he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1745 as a sizar. A sizar performed in those days a few menial services, in return for which he was exempted from payment for food or tuition. His uncle aided him in paying for his poor lodgings. Whether by reason of laziness, incapacity for the studies of the curriculum, or offended pride at his position, Goldsmith did not make a good record in the college. He neglected his work, played the buffoon in the classroom, spent his time in squalid dissipation when he had the money, and was lowest on the list of those receiving the B.A. degree in 1749.

The question of what to do with this young man of twenty-one, with an education but without a profession, seems to have worried his family not a little. His father had died while the boy was wasting his time at college, and had left almost nothing for his widow's support. Goldsmith returned to his mother's house and passed the time in careless idleness, full of high spirits and practical jokes, haunting the village inn far too often for his own good. At the spur of his friends he was encouraged to try for holy orders, but his application was declined by the bishop. He was encouraged to use his university training in tutoring, and actually remained steadfast in this occupation until he had saved up thirty pounds. With this amount he set out to make his fortune only to return in a few days with nothing but an unlikely yarn of his adventures. His uncle forgave the scapegrace, gave him fifty pounds, and started him off to Dublin to study law. In no time at all he was back at home, his money gone in gambling, and his law career forgotten. Again forgiven by his uncle, he was equipped with funds and dispatched to Edinburgh this time to study medicine. He stayed in Edinburgh eighteen months, and then proposed to his uncle that he be allowed to take a foreign tour to increase his knowledge of his profession. Funds were provided and he set forth for Leyden (1754).

Little is known of the incidents of his foreign tour. His money was soon gone, but for two years he subsisted on the Continent wandering from place to place. Boswell speaks of his having "disputed" his way, alluding to the custom in university and monastery circles of allowing a night's lodging and entertainment to any scholar who proved his mettle in upholding a thesis in debate. He did during this time, however, actually obtain somewhere, somehow, a medical degree, with which at last he returned to England.

His family seems to have washed its hands of this good-for-nothing scion at this time. No more funds were forthcoming, and even his letters remained unanswered. He was in London. February 1, 1756, fresh from his European travels, with a medical degree, but without money, friends, or influence. His situation was desperate. He was, it is true, a university man, but he had been the last on the list; he had successively tried the church, the law, the medical profession; he had failed in everything.

After having been submerged in London poverty for a few months, so completely submerged that no researches have filled up the details, he emerged as a tutor in the school of Mr. Milner at Peckham. There at dinner one day he met Griffiths, the bookseller. On the strength of his university training alone, apparently, Griffiths invited him to become a reviewer for Griffiths's magazine. The emoluments were board and lodging at Griffiths's house and a small but regular salary; the duties consisted of reviews of current publications; the hours were long and the amount of work demanded was very great. Truly his initiation into the world of literature was a very hard one. Goldsmith endured the conditions less than six months, then quarreled with his employer and was again in want. He moved from garret to garret in the slum districts; how

he subsisted at all remains a marvel to-day. He was thirty years old, cast off by his family, unknown to the world, in sore anxiety for his daily bread, and with no profession.

Although his attempt in literature with Griffiths had not been successful, it had made Goldsmith acquainted with the ways of the booksellers and the life of the literary hack. Such work in literature, indeed, offered the readiest chance of livelihood for a man of such habits and inclinations as Goldsmith, so he drifted into a life of intermittent hackwork for the publishers.

It is a curious fact in Goldsmith's literary career that his masterpieces were written in the hours snatched surreptitiously from his hackwork. He was almost continuously employed after 1759, but the prodigious product of his labors for the booksellers is practically forgotten now, whereas he is famous for the few poems and plays written under the urge of no contract. His *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, an endeavor to prove that criticism is and always has been the foe of literature and art, appeared in 1659; his contributions (he was the sole contributor) to Wilkie's short-lived magazine, the *Bee*, appeared in the autumn of the same year; his contributions to Smollett's *British Magazine* and to Newberry's daily newspaper, the *Public Ledger*, were spread over the next years; his papers for the *Citizen of the World*, the most famous of the immediate successors of Addison's *Spectator*, followed up to 1762; his *Life of Richard Nash*, a bookseller's task, appeared in the fall of 1762.

These works we have mentioned do not, with the exception of the *Citizen of the World*, contribute anything toward our modern estimate of Goldsmith's worth, but in their own time they gained for him the recognition of discerning men and certain friendships which made the years following the happiest of his erratic life. Johnson himself, the dictator in his contemporary world of letters, sought Goldsmith out and made him one of that circle of celebrities that formed the Club. Goldsmith became established on terms of intimacy with Hogarth, Reynolds, Burke, Beaumont Newhall, Hawkins, and Dr. Nugent. His finances, too, improved wonderfully, although his impecuniosity never changed. His annual income has been estimated at the equivalent of two hundred pounds a year; he moved into better lodgings; he could even entertain a little, a little supper for Johnson and Percy, for example.

The story of the production of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the first of his great successes, is familiar. Boswell gives it in Johnson's own words thus: "I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit, told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Meanwhile, Goldsmith had prepared a poem for publication. *The Traveller*, first planned as early as 1755, did not appear until 1764. It came at an auspicious moment for its author's fame. Poetry had languished in England since the supremacy of Pope. Akenside, Armstrong, Churchill, and Smollett were the most prominent names of the period; Gray wrote little and had become a confirmed recluse; Young was in his last years. Goldsmith's short poem struck a new note. Its worth, recognized at once by a select few, became gradually known to a wide circle of readers. Johnson appreciated it at once — "There has not been so fine a poem since Pope's time," he said to Boswell — and resented any implication of criticism.

Friday, January 29, 1768, Goldsmith first appeared in the rôle of dramatist with *The Good-Natur'd Man*. This little comedy, the Prologue to which was written by Johnson, achieved a fair success, and netted him financially the equivalent of about six hundred pounds. His spirits rose. He at once bought and furnished luxuriously a new suite of rooms, provided himself with servants, and entertained lavishly. He had become a "somebody" in the world, and his

optimistic, improvident nature led him to think his station secure for the rest of his life. Never did any man live more in the thought of the present day than Goldsmith.

His temporary gayety burdened him with a heavy load of debt, which in turn forced him back into hackwork for the publishers. He had not at any time been free from this. Even during the years when he was planning *The Good-Natur'd Man*, he was busy with reviews, compilations and the like to meet his current expenses. His name now had become known, however, and his value to the publishers rose accordingly. He worked assiduously (for him) on a *History of Rome* for Davies; closed a contract with Griffiths (about 1769) for a *History of Animated Nature*, to appear in eight volumes, and *A History of England, from the Birth of the British Empire to the Death of George the Second*, to appear in four octavo volumes, and a *Life of Thomas Parnell*. It must be taken into account that these books were by no means products of original research; they were adaptations, abridgments, and translations rendered in his own simple clear style at the demand of the booksellers. The amount of such work which he contracted to produce was colossal, it is true, but the pay was good, — *History of Rome*, two hundred and fifty pounds; *History of England*, five hundred pounds, for example, — and the task not difficult. The pity of it is that the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Deserted Village*, and *She Stoops to Conquer* should have used up his precious years in such work as compilation and adaptation.

His greatest success in poetry was written between whiles and appeared in 1770. *The Deserted Village* was foretold in a couplet in *The Traveller*: —

Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call
The smiling long-frequented village fall.

Simplicity, naturalness, sympathetic insight, and tenderness set this poem apart from the cold artificial works of the preceding age. With sure fingers, Goldsmith plays upon our memories and emotions in the portrayal of the simple rustic life in the village. The place of this poem has never in the successive changes of literary fashion been disputed. It is truly universal in its appeal.

He was freed from care and worry for a short time only. After a trip to the Continent and a whirl at social diversion, Goldsmith again had to bury himself in his writing to pay his current expenses. In the midst of the great compilations he had undertaken, however, he planned another coup to fill his purse. The play, *The Good-Natur'd Man*, had brought him a small fortune, so he tried again at a play for success. *She Stoops to Conquer*, the brilliant non-sentimental comedy, despaired of by its producer, was the result. The natural foolery of this comedy made an immediate success for it in its own day and has secured for it in English comedy a permanent place as a classic.

His last years were sad. His successes provided him with funds, but not with the wisdom to use them. His debts, instead of being removed, actually increased. He is estimated to have had during the last seven years of his life an income equivalent to eight hundred pounds a year a day, which for a bachelor should have insured comfort and independence, but the improvident Goldsmith would have been poor with ten times that amount. His purse was ever open. His habits were careless and extravagant, he always spent twice what he was in prospect to receive. He proceeded to contract with the booksellers again for long compilations, in many cases receiving substantial sums in advance. The optimistic cheerfulness which had been his most prominent characteristic wore away with his continual worries — Reynolds estimated, as Dr. Johnson, that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. His long sedentary habits took on his constitution, and on March 25, 1774, he took to his bed. April 4, he died. April 9 he was privately buried in Temple Church graveyard.

"His associates," writes Macaulay, "seem to have regarded him with kindness, which in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect."

WILLIAM COWPER

WILLIAM COWPER was born at the rectory of Great Berkhamstead, November 26, 1731. He was descended from an ancient and honorable family. His great-grandfather was Sir William Cowper, Bart.; his grandfather was a judge in the court of common pleas; his great-uncle was the Lord Chancellor under Anne and George I; his father, the Reverend John Cowper, was rector of Berkhamstead and later chaplain to George II. His mother was Anne Donne, of the same race as the poet John Donne and, according to the claim of the family, a descendant from Henry III. She died when he was but six years old. This bereavement left upon the sensitive child a feeling of irreparable loss which continued throughout his whole life.

After his mother's death, Cowper was entered in a large boarding-school. There he suffered intensely. With the brutality of boyhood, his more robust companions took various opportunities to tease and maltreat him. He speaks in later years of having been "singled out from all the other boys by a lad of about fifteen years of age as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper." His experiences inspired his plea for home education instead of boarding-school education in the poem *Tirocinium*, written and published near the close of his life.

From this boarding-school, after a period of two years when he was under constant treatment for eye trouble, he was sent (1741) to Westminster. His life there was more endurable: he speaks of his skill at cricket and football and occasionally of his enjoyment of life. His education was, of course, along the classical lines regularly pursued in the schools of the time. He seems to have made no noteworthy record in his studies.

When he left Westminster in 1749 he was articled to an attorney, Mr. Chapman, to study law. After three years with Mr. Chapman, Cowper took chambers for himself in the Temple, where he desultorily read law. He finally was formally called to the Bar, but his interest never was in the profession. He spent much of his time in trying his hand at literature, associating with a little group of journalists and *littérateurs* who composed the Nonsense Club — Bonnell, Thornton, Colman, Lloyd, and others — and contributing a few papers to the *Connoisseur* and the *St. James Chronicle*. He did very little in poetry, just a few verses to the conventional "Delia" and an epistle to his friend Lloyd.

His prospects at law were abruptly terminated by an event wholly unforeseen and peculiarly terrible. When he was thirty-two years old, he was nominated to the office of Clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords. The position was one which he was fully able to fill and which would have yielded him a competency for life. For a while he devoted himself with all his powers to special study in preparation for his duties, but as the time drew near for him to make his public appearance, he fell into the deepest melancholy. He foresaw possible criticism and opposition, he felt implied hostility in every paragraph of the daily journals, even in the glances of passers-by, he could not eat or sleep, his imaginary troubles so wrought upon his mind that at last he became insane and attempted suicide. The nomination was, of course, withdrawn as soon as his condition was known and he was placed in the private asylum of a Dr. Cotton at St. Alban's in December of 1763. There he remained, kindly cared for, for many months.

His recovery from his madness was accompanied by a sudden religious fervor. He writes of having taken up the Bible one morning and perused the third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon in His blood, and the fulness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel."

His condition when he left the asylum was pitiful. Continuance in the law was impossible, his friends were lost, a large part of his personal funds were exhausted. His family contributed a sum sufficient to yield him a small income, and after a time, settled him in the village of Huntingdon.

Here began his famous friendship with Mrs. Unwin, a friendship pure and firm through all the intervening years until her death. Cowper was brought into contact with the Unwins through their mutual religious feeling. The Unwins — the Reverend William Unwin, his wife Mary, and their son and daughter — were, like Cowper, converts to the Methodist movement that was the religious sensation of the period. In his new enthusiasm, increased perhaps by his belief that he had been saved from his madness by the direct interposition of the Almighty, Cowper desired nothing more than the opportunity to live in perpetual converse with religious people upon religious subjects. Attracted to the Unwins by their similar enthusiasm, he soon became a boarder in their house. He was from the first strongly attracted toward Mrs. Unwin. "That woman is a blessing to me," he wrote, "and I never see her without being the better for her company." He describes upon another occasion his usual day: "We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. . . . At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayer. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness, accordingly, we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren."

Less than two years after Cowper went to reside at the Unwins the Reverend William Unwin was killed by a fall from his horse. The friendship between Cowper and Mrs. Unwin, however, kept them together. They lived as companions for life. No scandal is possible with regard to their association: Cowper himself says that they were as mother and son, and Mrs. Unwin's son, a very religious man, had no misgivings with regard to the connection.

Inspired by a desire to be near the Reverend John Newton, a leader of the religious revival, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin moved to the squalid little village of Olney in Buckinghamshire. There under Newton's leadership they continued their religious devotions. Cowper wrote a number of hymns for a church hymnal and was encouraged to visit among the poor. His mode of life for the past years began again to affect his brain: he became morbid, worried about his salvation, finally believed that he was one of the doomed, and tried once more to commit suicide. For sixteen months he was out of his mind, tended all the while with the most loving care by Mrs. Unwin and Newton.

When he recovered, he sought for some congenial mental occupation to prevent a return of his disease. He was now, 1781, a man of fifty, without occupation or profession, and with a mental trouble that might at any time recur. To Mrs. Unwin he owed the suggestion that he turn to poetry. She realized that he would thus occupy his mind, but she could hardly have hoped that he would gain success and fame. It was she, too, who suggested the subjects about which he should write, but her suggestion, *The Progress of Error*, was, unhappily, tinged with her deep religious feelings. Cowper adopted her suggestion, but the result was a failure. The volume containing this poem and *Truth, Table Talk, Expostulation, Hope, Charity, Consecration*, and *Restiveness* appeared in 1782. The criticisms were unfavorable and in this case posterity agrees with the contemporary judgment. Outside of a few purple patches, the poems are uninspired and forced.

The subject for his great work, *The Task*, was suggested by a new friend he made at the time his first volume of poems was being prepared for the press. Lady Austen, a bright, vivacious widow, came into the village one day to shop, met Mrs. Unwin and Cowper, seemed to feel a great attraction for them, and in a short time settled in a near-by house. The three became inseparable companions: "Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's Chateau." On one occasion she told him the story of John Gilpin, much to his amusement, and the next morning he informed her "that convulsions of laughter brought on by his recollection of

her story had kept him waking during the greatest part of the night, and that he had turned it into a ballad." Of greater importance, however, was her suggestion that he try a great poem in blank verse. When asked for a subject, she suggested the sofa on which she lay. From the suggestion grew *The Task* (published 1784), its title reminding the reader that

... the Fair commands the song.

This poem constitutes Cowper's chief claim to a place among the leading English poets. It is indeed the poem of a sect, being a concrete expression of the Methodism of the time, but it is more than that. The sympathy he shows for the quiet secluded country life, the truth and sincere joy with which he depicts the homely pleasures of the modest home, the close and accurate observations of nature: — it is in these characteristics that Cowper struck an original note in his long poem, "a poem," says the devoted Hayley, "of such infinite variety, that it seems to include every subject, and every style, without any dissonance or disorder: and to have flowed without effort, from inspired philanthropy, eager to impress upon the hearts of all readers, whatever may lead them, most happily, to the full enjoyment of human life, and to the final attainment of heaven."

The next few years were among the happiest of his life. Although a coolness came between him and Lady Austen, her place was more than filled by his cousin, Lady Hesketh, who came to live with him at this time. He worked busily at his poetry, publishing in 1785 a volume containing a number of his better known lyrics, as *The Loss of the Royal George*, *The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk*, *The Poplar Field*, *The Needless Alarm*, *To Mary*, and beginning his longest work, the translation of Homer. The Homer was published in 1791 in two quarto volumes and the first edition was sold out in less than six months. Realizing that health of mind and body lay in continued occupation, he planned a sumptuous edition of Milton, with notes, translations of the Latin and Italian poems, illustrations, etc., but this task was never finished. He engaged himself more enthusiastically upon a revision of his translation of Homer.

With advancing years — he was now over sixty — he began again to fall into the settled melancholy that had in previous instances led to madness, and during these years his faithful companion was in no condition to aid him. Even while his strength was ebbing, Mrs. Unwin was stricken with paralysis and her mind failed. Without her Cowper sank into a pitiful state of dejection, bordering on insanity. She died in December, 1796, but Cowper was in such a mental condition that he scarcely realized she had gone. He lingered on for three wretched years, wholly dependent on the care and kindness of friends and distant relatives. He passed away peacefully April 25, 1800, at the age of sixty-eight. His grave is in St. Edmund's Chapel in Dereham Church.

ROBERT BURNS

ALTHOUGH individual genius is always unique in its manifestations, most authors show marked traces of the literary influences that have surrounded them. Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Pope, and the rest reflected in their poetry the literary traditions of the age and society in which they lived. Even the immortal Shakespeare, who rose so far above his predecessors and contemporaries, is truly a child of the Elizabethan period, and a study of the development of his technical skill in the drama shows along what regular and natural lines it proceeded. Occasionally, however, a native genius, untrammelled by the fetters of contemporary literary custom or thought, flashes across the horizon. Such a genius was Robert Burns. He was, as the learned Ramsay called him, "in truth, a sort of comet in literature."

Robert Burns was born January 25, 1759, near the village of Ayr, Scotland. He was the first of the seven children of William Burns (Burness or Burnes) and Agnes Brown. William Burns, a poor farmer, was a man of strictest probity and deep piety. His poet-son has left an ineffaceable portrait of him in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. Agnes Burns was an Ayrshire woman, deeply religious as was her husband, and fond of the old Scottish songs and ballads. Burns's

lifelong reverence of the memory of his father and his provision for the care of his mother are notable traits in his character.

Burns's youth was bitterly hard. His father struggled unsuccessfully with farms at Moss, Oliphant and Lochlea, and the boys, though not fully grown, were called upon for men's work. "The unceasing toil of a galley-slave," Burns called it in later years. The education of the children was not neglected, however, even in the face of poverty and constant labor. At five years of age, Robert attended the village school and a few years later his father combined with his neighbors to hire a tutor for the children. This tutor, John Murdoch, a man of exceptional intelligence, took especial pains in training his charges in grammar and rhetoric, the use and meaning of words, so that, on the authority of his younger brother, Gilbert Burns, Robert "soon became remarkable for the fluency and correctness of his expression, and read the few books that came in his way with much pleasure and improvement." We know from Burns's own account some of these few books: *The Spectator*, certain plays of Shakespeare, works of Pope, Locke's huge *Essay*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Taylor's *Doctrine of Original Sin*, the works of Allan Ramsay, the writings of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Hume, and Robertson, and, most precious of all (his *vade mecum*, Burns calls it later), a collection of songs. In his education the influence of his father must be noted. Burns testifies to the value of this when he writes, "he conversed on all subjects with us familiarly," and "was at great pains, as we accompanied him in the labors of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge or confirm our virtuous habits."

Burns's father, worn out by his futile efforts at farming, died in 1784, leaving little but debts. Robert and Gilbert had a few months previously taken a farm a few miles away at Mossiel and there they took their mother and their younger brothers and sisters after William Burns's death.

Even before his father's death, Burns had fallen into evil company in the neighboring village of Kirkoswald and Irvine. He had tasted the joys of dissipation and he had learned to look upon illegitimate love with a careless mind. When the farm at Mossiel failed to alleviate his poverty, he seems to have yielded to the temptations that abounded in the neighborhood. His genius as a poet and wit was already known among his companions and made him welcome in any convivial crowd. His readiness of address made him attractive to the young women of his own social circles. Together with the unfolding of his genius as a poet during the four years at Mossiel is to be recorded the sad story of the beginnings of his moral downfall.

Burns had begun to write his lyrics as early as his fifteenth year. Inspired then by sudden love for a partner in a harvest dance, he wrote his first poem, *Handsome Nell*, "in a wild enthusiasm of passion." "To this hour I never recollect it," said he in later years, "but my heart melts, my blood sallies at the remembrance." It was characteristic of Burns's inspiration that he wrote his best verses under circumstances similar to the above. A chance *amour*, entered upon with the abandoned enthusiasm of his ardent nature, might result in an unrivaled burst of song. "I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I once got heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart." An unhappy feature of his life was that his excesses of affection like his excesses in drink proved the ruin, not only of himself, but of others dear to him.

There is no necessity for chronicling in detail the successive *amours* of this master-lover. In November, 1784, a daughter was born to him of Elizabeth Paton and was taken into his house by his mother and tenderly nurtured. His fatherhood brought upon him the censure of his church and evoked from him a short series of satirical poems in reply — *The Twa Herds*, *Hel's Willie's Prayer*, *The Ordination*, *The Holy Fair*. After a courtship extending through 1785, early in 1786 Burns and Jean Armour, the daughter of a mason in a near-by village, were secretly and irregularly married. Shortly afterwards the girl's angry father forced her to give up Burns and to destroy the evidences of her marriage. In September of the same year Jean became the mother of twin children. Even in the midst of these troubles, Burns was carrying on his *amour* with Mary Campbell, a simple, faithful Argyllshire lass who, according to one biographer aroused in Burns the truest love he ever knew.

During the troubled months between the fall of 1784 and the spring of 1786 Burns wrote many of his best-known poems, including *The Two Dogs*, *The Holy Fair*, *Address to the Deil*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, *To a Mouse*, *Man was Made to Mourn*, *To a Mountain Daisy*, *To a Louse*, *Song: Composed in August*.

The publication of his poems was undertaken in 1786 to provide Burns with funds to go to Jamaica to escape the depressing poverty at home and the legal revenge threatened by Jean Armour's father. The little volume, published by John Wilson of Kilmarnock, won immediate fame. Burns received about twenty pounds as his share of the profits of the sale, and bought steerage passage for the West Indies. Just before his ship sailed, however, he changed his plans. "I had taken the last farewell of my friends; my chest was on the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, '*The gloomy night is gathering fast*,' when a letter from Dr. Blackwood to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening up new prospects to my poetic ambition."

At the end of 1786 Burns went to Edinburgh to try his fortunes. His winter there was a triumph for him as a poet and the ruination of him as a man. The plowman poet was fêted and honored by the rich, the learned, and the great; he became the lion of the social circles and held his own in wit and conversation with the best in the city. But along beside his visits at the houses of the great were night gatherings in the clubs and brotherhoods of Edinburgh's taverns. In the taverns he found the people more congenial to him. There was no restraint to the railery, the jests, and the drinking. Burns became the boon companion to the young bloods of the time, an acknowledged leader in their carousals, and indulged his wit and satire, it was said, at the expense of his more noble and dignified hosts. He was given a taste of revelries and excesses that far surpassed the dissipations of his Ayrshire valleys.

His finances improved wonderfully with an Edinburgh edition of his poems including only a few poems not in his Kilmarnock book, as *The Address to the Unco' Guid*, *A Winter Night*, and "*The gloomy night is gathering fast*." It is estimated that he received in all about five hundred pounds at this time, enough, anyway, to lend his brothers one hundred and eighty pounds and to take a trip himself among the Scottish Highlands. His return to the incessant toil of his Moss-giel farm accentuated the difference between the Edinburgh life and the condition to which he was born. He became dissatisfied and moody, restlessly unhappy under the conditions and restricted gayeties at Moss-giel. In this spirit he returned to Edinburgh for the winter of 1787-88.

If he looked for the repetition of his former reception, as he probably did, he was bitterly disappointed. His day of glory was over. Gentlemen no longer counted his company; society no longer dined and entertained him; the learned no longer inclined to engage him in sallies of wit and discussion. Burns was practically ignored. The effect upon him was lamentable. He became embittered against the rich and the great and relieved his feelings by excesses in the taverns where he still was welcome. He may have thought of preferment in office when he returned to Edinburgh, but his hopes were quickly undeceived and his anger increased. The favor and smiles of these people of influence had, after all, meant nothing. In the spring of 1788 he bought with his remaining funds a farm at Ellisland, near Dumfries, and married Jean Armour, apparently resolved to return to his native occupation and give up the life of the city.

His farm at Ellisland was, as the factor who rented it told him, a poet's choice and not a farmer's, so that, for the support of his growing family, he applied for and obtained a position as exciseman for his district, yielding him a salary of fifty pounds a year. His duties took him over a district roughly fifty miles square and compelled him to ride fully two hundred miles a week. He felt keenly the stigma attached to his office, but seems to have performed his task creditably. The journeys necessary for his excise business, however, kept him away from his farm for long periods and hastened the utter failure of his hopes in that direction.

Meanwhile, the springs of song did not fail within him. When he was in Edinburgh he met James Johnson, who was collecting a *Musical Museum* of the songs of Scotland. Burns had enthusiastically cooperated with Johnson in his work, aiding by his knowledge of Scottish tradition, by his criticism (Burns was practically the editor of the collection from 1788 until his

health began to fail), and especially by the contribution of his own songs. During the whole of his Ellisland residence he continued to send songs to Johnson, until he was represented in the *Museum* by one hundred and eighty-four pieces. Included among these were: *A Rosebud* by an *Early Walk*, *The Silver Tassie*, *Of a' the Airts*, *My Heart's in the Highlands*, *John Anderson, Jo*, *Thou Lingerin' Star*, *Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, *As Fond Kiss*, *The Banks o' Doon*, *The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman*, *The Lovely Lass of Inverness*, *A Red, Red Rose*, *Auld Lang Syne*, *Comin' Thro' the Rye*. During the last months of his stay at Ellisland he composed his famous narrative poem, *Tam o' Shanter*. This, not being a song, was not contributed to Johnson, but appeared independently.

The hopelessness of the attempt at farming at Ellisland led Burns finally to move his family (end of 1791) into Dumfries. This meant the total loss of the two hundred and fifty or three hundred pounds he had put into the farm at the beginning, and also meant that he intended to support himself wholly by his excise duties. No move could have been more unfortunate. He not only surrendered for nothing what might at least have yielded him and his family enough food to maintain life, but he left the clean atmosphere of his upland farm for the many temptations of a busy Scotch town. Furthermore, he interested himself in the politics of the day, ranging himself on the liberal side and speaking freely in favor of the revolutionists in France. These acts brought upon him the censure of the Government and the prospect of the loss of his position in the excise, upon which the poor poet was forced to make his peace and keep his opinions to himself. Altogether his years at Dumfries were marked by bitter discouragement and by the acceleration of his moral and physical downfall.

His poetry diminished in quantity during these years. In 1792 he was invited by George Thompson to contribute to another collection of Scottish songs and melodies. It is characteristic of Burns that he responded enthusiastically, — "I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have," — but that he refused all pay: "to talk of money wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright prostitution of soul." Burns remained true to his promise, giving song after song to the collection and indignantly repudiating any suggestion of reward. In all he contributed sixty songs to the collection, although only a fraction of his contribution appeared before his death. Some of these songs were selected from those he had previously contributed to Johnson's *Museum*, and some were songs written earlier. Among the finest contributions were the following: *Duncan Gray*, *Saw ye Bonie Lesley*, *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, *Highland Mary*, *Is there for Honest Poverty*, *There was a Lass*, *Mary Morison*.

His dissipations and excesses had made him prematurely aged and weakened his naturally strong constitution. The end came in 1796. In January, after an evening of drunken revels, Burns fell in the street and lay there asleep for some time. A rheumatic fever came from this accident, the effects of which he never was able to shake off. He could not keep up his excise duties during the lingering illness that followed and felt the stings of actual want. July 21 he died. A great public funeral was accorded him, the people high and low forgetting quickly his weaknesses and paying their reverence to his true greatness. He was buried in a corner of St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries.

As a song-writer Burns is without peer. The spontaneity of his inspiration, the depth and directness of his vision, the sincerity of his emotion, have given to his lyrics a freshness that never fades. In his poems we have no Cynthias, no Venuses, Adonises, or pretended shepherds, Phyllises and Corydons, but instead the clear, open world of nature and of man. His sympathies are both broad and intense, his humor is at times delicate and subtle and again broad and piercing, his range is from withering invective to tenderest pathos, his style is without affectation or artificiality. He is the great interpreter of Scottish life. From one aspect we have *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, from another the rollicking *Hallowe'en*, from yet another the *Tam o' Shanter*, embodying something of the weird superstitious element in Scotch character; again the boisterous revels of *The Jolly Beggars*, and above all the martial *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*. His poems have, indeed, become the poetry of a people. His wrecked life is forgotten in the glory of the inspiration that breathed into his verse the life and soul of Scotland.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

GRAY and Collins, but more especially Cowper and Burns, had during the eighteenth century given a hint of an awakening in poets to a new conception of life and of nature, but the full renaissance came with the work of Wordsworth and, to a less extent, of Coleridge. The true beginnings of the Romantic movement in literature corresponded in time closely to the French Revolution in politics and had some characteristics in common with it. As the French Revolution issued in a new era, so did Wordsworth's poetry; as the French Revolution emphasized the rights of the individual, so did Wordsworth discover a new dignity in humble life; as the French Revolution had one of its roots in the return to nature preached by Rousseau, so Wordsworth sought the main springs of his inspiration in a new conception of nature and man's relations with it. A revolution in letters accompanied the revolution in politics, and of the revolution in letters the quiet, secluded Wordsworth was the prophet.

Wordsworth once dictated to his nephew, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, passages for an intended biography. "I was born," he said, "at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7, 1770, the second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law — as lawyers of this class were then called — and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. My mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson, Mercer, of Penrith, and of Dorothy, born Crackanthorpe, of the ancient family of that name, who from the times of Edward the Third had lived in Newbiggen Hall, Westmoreland. My grandfather was the first of the name of Wordsworth who came into Westmoreland, when he purchased the small estate of Sockbridge. He was descended from a family who had been settled at Peniston, in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest. . . . The time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, in consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called 'a best bedroom.' My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year. . . . Of my earliest days at school I have little to say, but that they were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty then, and in the vacations, to read whatever books I liked. . . . It may be, perhaps, as well to mention that the first verses which I wrote were a task imposed by my master — the subject, *The Summer Vacation*; and of my own account I added others upon *Return to School*. There was nothing remarkable in either poem."

Wordsworth's whole life was bound up intimately with the region in which he was born and passed his youth. As soon as he grew to manhood, he returned there and settled among the scenes that had impressed him as a child and that grew to be literally a part of his life. Acutely sensitive to the influences of natural beauty, and endowed with a spiritual insight which enabled him to interpret these to the world, Wordsworth found in the Lake region all the necessary inspiration for his greatest poems. He was born on the edge of the district, his earliest memories were of Derwent and Skiddaw, his school days at Hawkshead, on the banks of Esthwaite Water, led him to the opposite end of the district, his walks took him through every mile of ground, and in his manhood he settled on the banks of Grasmere Lake and later at Rydal Mount overlooking the little Rydal Lake. The scenery of his poems is the scenery of the Lakes and the surrounding hills and valleys, and the people are the people who lived there.

The life of no poet is more uneventful outwardly than was Wordsworth's. By the generosity of his uncles, to whose care he and his brothers and sisters had been entrusted at their father's death, he was sent to Cambridge in October, 1787, where he took his B.A. degree in January, 1791. His college career was not especially noteworthy. During his third vacation he took with a single friend a walking tour in Switzerland, coming into actual contact with the stir of the great Revolution in Europe. Perhaps something in what he saw there led him, after a short stay in London, to make another trip to France in November of 1791. He became actively enthusiastic over the revolutionary cause at this time and thought at one time of putting him-

self forward as a leader of the Girondist Party, but his family, wisely alarmed at the prospect, stopped his allowances and thus brought him back to England. A year later the war that ensued between France and England stirred him deeply, since he felt love and sympathy on the one hand for the French in their struggle and on the other for his native country in what he first believed its misguided course. In 1795, when he was twenty-five years old, he was joined by his sister Dorothy and, with the proceeds of a small legacy left him by his friend Calvert, settled in a cottage at Racedown, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire. There began the quiet, introspective life which lasted for more than half a century. His sister was always with him, giving him wise and loving care and the companionship of perfect sympathy. October 4, 1802, he married Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith. With perfect tact she adapted herself to his life, careful and frugal, devoted to her husband, and never jealous of the sister who was so dear a companion. Henceforward, the even course of his life was little varied. He knew the joys and sorrows that are familiar to most men, the joys of friendship and of fatherhood, and the intense sorrows that come with the stroke of death in the family circle; he took a few trips in his own country and abroad; he changed his home until he acquired the ideal house at Rydal Mount. No interesting sensation can be extracted from a life like this.

If his life was outwardly uneventful, however, his inward development was the opposite. No poet has more freely disclosed to us his thoughts and the gradual unfolding of his mental life. The longest works he has left to us, and the works containing some of the noblest passages he ever wrote, are fragments of an epic he projected on his own education. To *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* the biographer must always refer for the true source of Wordsworth's power and greatness. There he tells us of his emotions as a boy, of his career at college, of his trip to Switzerland, of his feelings during the French Revolution and the subsequent war between France and England, of his life among the lakes and hills, of his philosophy.

Wordsworth's first poetical publication of importance was made jointly with Coleridge in the little volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads*. His story of how the volume grew out of an agreement with Coleridge to write a single poem to defray the expenses of a short walking trip is familiar. "In the course of this walk was planned the poem of *The Ancient Mariner*. . . . As we endeavored to proceed conjointly our respective manners proved so widely different, that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. The *Ancient Mariner* grew and grew, till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to think of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium." The little volume appeared in the fall of 1798, including, of Wordsworth's best work, *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, and *Lines Written above Tintern Abbey*, the last-named being indeed a poetic confession of faith. The poems, and particularly the preface, in which the theory was boldly advanced that "The principal object proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men," attracted considerable attention to the authors at the time.

A convenient division of Wordsworth's poetical work has been suggested. From the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* until about 1814 he wrote in the full fervor of an apostle of a new faith. His best lyrics are of this period; as, *Ruth*, *Nutting*, *Lucy Gray*, *The Daffodils*, *To a Cuckoo*, *My Heart Leaps Up*, *To the Daisy*, *Ode to Duty*, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. Some of the best known of his narrative poems, also (as *Michael*, *Resolution and Independence*, *To Brothers*, *Margaret*), and the whole of *The Prelude*, belong to this early period. In 1814 he finished *The Excursion*, the attempt to incorporate in poetry his own psychical development and philosophy. The projected poem, *The Recluse*, of which in its final form *The Excursion* was to be a part, was never finished. After 1814 the quality of his poetry was on the whole poorer, though he continued to write diligently. A few lyrics stand out above the rest with a gleam of the old inspiration, *To a Skylark* (*Ethereal Minstrel*!), *Yarrow Revisited*, *The Trosachs*, but x

ent much time in poetry which to us to-day seems uninspired, as the *Eccleristical Sonnets* of 1821 and 1822, and a translation of a part of the *Æneid* in 1829 and 1830.

Recognition and honor came in his latter years. Between 1830 and 1840 the circle of his readers broadened and the general appreciation of his merit grew. A notable manifestation of it was the honorary degree of D.C.L. conferred on him by the University of Oxford in 1839, on which occasion Keble, the professor of poetry in the institution, introduced him as "one who shed a celestial light upon the affections, the occupations, and the piety of the poor," and the applause was greater than had ever been given before except upon the visits of the Duke of Wellington. In 1842 he was given an annuity of three hundred pounds from the Civil list for distinguished literary merit, Sir Robert Peel stating "The acceptance by you of this mark of favour from the Crown, considering the grounds on which it is proposed, will impose no straint upon your perfect independence, and involves no obligation of a personal nature." In March, 1843, after the death of Southey, he was offered the Poet Laureateship and, after some hesitation, accepted.

His work, however, was done. After the death of his daughter, Dora, in 1847, he wrote nothing. His last days were calm and peaceful. A slight cold, caught on one of his walks, brought on a pleurisy, from which he died at noon April 23, 1850. According to his wish, he was buried in Rasmere churchyard.

Wordsworth was ever confident, even in the days succeeding Jeffrey's famous "This will ever do" criticism, that his work would ultimately win recognition. Henry Crabb Robinson notes a visit from the poet in 1812: "He spoke of his own poems with the just feeling of confidence which a sense of his own excellence gives him. . . . He is persuaded that if men are to become better and wiser, the poems will sooner or later make their way."

And the poems have made their way, fulfilling a prophecy of Southey in 1804 that Wordsworth "will rank among the very first poets." Wordsworth's fellow poet and devoted admirer, Coleridge, has so fully analyzed the characteristics of Wordsworth's work that an independent attempt is superfluous. I, therefore, quote from the *Biographia Literaria* passages summarizing the excellences of this poetry: —

"First, an austere purity of language both grammatically and logically; in short a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. . . .

"The second characteristic excellence of Mr. Wordsworth's work is: a correspondent weight and sanity of the Thoughts and Sentiments, — won, not from books; but — from the poet's own meditative observation. They are *fresh* and have the dew upon them. His muse, at least when in her strength of wing, and when she hovers aloft in her proper element, —

Makes audible a linked lay of truth,
Of truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!

"Even throughout his smaller poems there is scarcely one, which is not rendered valuable by its just and original reflection. . . .

"Third (and wherein he soars far above Daniel) the sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs: the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction, of which I need not here give examples, having anticipated them in a preceding page. This beauty, and as eminently characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, his rudest assailants have felt themselves compelled to acknowledge and admire.

"Fourth; the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. Like a green field reflected in a calm and perfectly transparent lake, the image is distinguished from the reality only by its greater softness and purity. Like the moisture of the polish on a pebble, genius neither distorts nor false-colours its objects; but on the contrary brings out many a vein and many a tint, which escape the eye of common observation, thus raising to the rank of gems what had been often kicked away by the treading foot of the traveller on the dusty high road of custom. . . .

"Fifth; a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or comate (*spectator, haud particeps*), but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, or toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine. The superscription and the image of the Creator still remain legible to him under the dark lines, with which guilt or calamity had cancelled or cross-barred it. Here the Man and the Poet lose and find themselves in each other, the one as glorified, the latter as substantiated. In this mild and philosophic pathos, Wordsworth appears to me without a compeer. Such as he is: so he writes. . . .

"Last, and preëminently, I challenge for this poet the gift of Imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of fancy, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is not always graceful, and sometimes recondite. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands the peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of predetermined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed his fancy seldom displays itself, as mere and unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own. To employ his own words which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed to all thoughts and to all objects —

"add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, October 21, 1772, the youngest of the thirteen children of the Reverend John Coleridge. His father, the vicar of the little parish, was a kindly but somewhat eccentric genius, steeped in Hebrew which he commended to his little flock as "the immediate language of the Holy Ghost," and, learned in the classics. His mother Anne Bowdon (John Coleridge's second wife), was a practical and industrious but uneducated woman, who seems to have had less influence than mothers usually exercise over their children. "Possessing none even of the most common accomplishments of her day," Mr. Gillman writes from information derived from Coleridge himself, "she had neither love nor sympathy for the display of them in others."

Coleridge was a precocious child: "At a very premature age," he says, "even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and theological controversy. Nothing pleased me." In his tenth year he was entered for school at Christ's Hospital. There he came under Dr. Bowyer's especial observation because he was known to have read Virgil for amusement, and was encouraged in his studies. He testifies to the master's genius and influence as follows: "At school [Christ's Hospital] I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible though at the same time, a very severe master, the Reverend James Bowyer. He early modified my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero, of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil; again of Virgil to Ovid. He habituated me to compare Lucretius (in such extracts as I then read), Terence, and above all the chaster poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the, so-called, silver and brazen ages; but with even those of the Augustan æra: and on grounds of plain sense and universal logic to see and assert the superiority of the former in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons: and they were the lessons too, which required most time and trouble to bring up, so as to escape his censure. I learned from him, that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had its logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and

I well remember that; availing himself of the synonyms to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered the same purpose; and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text."

At the age of nineteen he entered Jesus College, Cambridge. Of his college career we know little. From the accounts of one of his schoolfellows we learn that his room was the "rendezvous of conversation-loving friends," and that his interest in current politics was active. One incident reveals the impulsive peculiarity of the boy. Depressed by some untoward event, he suddenly left Cambridge, went to London, and enlisted in the Fifteenth Light Dragoons under the alias of Silas Tomkyn Comberbach (S. T. C.). He was relieved from his predicament after a few months, was discharged, and returned to college. Coleridge never took his college degree. He conceived a tremendous enthusiasm for a Pantisocracy, an ideal democracy on the banks of the Susquehanna, in which coöperative commonwealth he and Southey and Lovell were to be the leading spirits. To complete arrangements for this he left college in 1794.

October 4, 1795, Coleridge, still committed to the idea of a Pantisocracy and apparently inspired by the thought that a wife would be a valuable aid in such an ideal commonwealth, was married to Sarah (or Sara) Fricker, a sister-in-law to Southey. Although in later years Coleridge, looking back through years of bitter sorrows, spoke of this marriage as having been in a manner forced upon him, there is plenty of evidence to prove a true and sincere affection between the two in the first years of their married life. He was probably plunged into the love passion at the moment as he was plunged successively into the Fifteenth Light Dragoons and the impracticable scheme of a Pantisocracy.

In April, 1797, appeared a thin volume containing fifty poems, *Poems on various subjects*, by S. T. Coleridge, late of Jesus College, Cambridge. These were poems that had been written at various times since 1789 and were now collected and published by his friend, Amos Cottle. These poems did not attract much attention, nor did they deserve attention: in a later edition Coleridge himself criticized them as being "charged with a profusion of double epithets and a general turgidness."

More important works were to come, however, and soon. Coleridge first met Wordsworth in the summer of 1795 and two years later (1797) he went to visit the poet at his cottage in Racedown. Then began that intimate poetic companionship that resulted in the *Lyrical Ballads* a year later, and gave the inspiration for the too short-lived flower of Coleridge's genius. Coleridge had discerned in Wordsworth's earliest published work signs of unusual power and was eager to be with him.

Wordsworth after Coleridge's visit moved from his Racedown cottage to Alfoxden in order to allow more intimate companionship. For a year the two were constantly together, thinking and talking of nothing but poetry: "... our conversation," writes Coleridge in his *Biographica Literaria*, "turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. . . . The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; . . . In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." From the inspiration of such companionship and "conversation" as this sprang *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (which actually appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* volume), and *Christabel*, as well as the *Ode to France*, *Fears in Solitude*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Love*, and the fragment, *Kubla Khan*. And when, shortly after, the imponderable thread of sympathetic companionship was severed, the poetic inspiration lapsed, and only the second part of *Christabel* (1800) and the sad stanzas *To Dejection* (1802) remain to show what might have been.

His stay at Stowey where he was so near Wordsworth was interrupted in January of 1798 by

a call from Shrewsbury for him to undertake there the duties of the Unitarian minister. For a month he did this, but his friends the Wedgwoods (sons of the famous potter), shocked at the idea of his giving up his poetry, offered him an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds on condition that he would devote himself entirely to poetry and philosophy. This offer he accepted; he returned to Stowey in February, and was with Wordsworth until they all together went to Germany at the end of the year.

In Germany, the Wordsworths lived at Goslar, but Coleridge, after five months of hard study at Ratzeburg, went on to Göttingen, again to study. He returned to England in the late summer of 1799. In his absence from Wordsworth, however, the spell that had inspired him was broken, never again in its full potency to be renewed. He was with Wordsworth again, — in September of 1799 he was exploring with Wordsworth the Lake country, — but the renewed association did not re-create the spell. He wrote more poetry, it is true, but none that approached *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the first part of *Christabel*. He translated *Wallenstein*, he contributed occasionally verses to the *Morning Post*, as *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, and *The Devil's Thoughts*, but his work as a poet was done.

We have to record now the sad, sad story of Coleridge's degeneration. In 1800 he left London and moved to Keswick in the Lake region. At some period within the next few years, just when it is impossible to say, he became addicted to the use of opium. He places the time for us himself as nearly as it can be placed: "I wrote a few stanzas three and twenty years ago, soon after my eyes had been opened to the nature of the habit into which I had been ignorantly deluded by the seeming magic effects of opium, in the sudden removal of a supposed rheumatic affection, attended with the swellings in my knees and palpitation of the heart and pains all over me, by which I had been bedridden for nearly six months . . . in one of these [medical] reviews I met a case which I fancied very like my own in which a cure had been effected by the Kendal Black Drop. In an evil hour I procured it: it worked miracles — the swellings disappeared, the pains vanished. I was all alive, and all around me being as ignorant as myself, nothing could exceed my triumph. . . . Alas! it is with a bitter smile, a laugh of gall and bitterness, that I recall this period of unsuspecting delusion, and how I first became aware of the maelstrom, the fatal whirlpool to which I was drawing, just when the current was beyond my strength to stem."

The results of the habit were inevitable: he became unsteady of purpose, shiftless, restless, unhappy, and ill; he alienated his wife, and lost his sense of responsibility for his family, so that the burden of their support was shifted to the patient and industrious Southey; he sank for weeks and months at a time out of sight of his friends; he became a mental and physical wreck. Cottle, who ran across him in 1814, writes in his *Recollections*: "In 1814 S. T. C. had been long, very long, in the habit of taking from two quarts of laudanum a week to a pint a day, and on one occasion he had been known to take in the twenty-four hours a whole quart of laudanum."

In 1816 Coleridge at last mustered up moral strength enough to put himself into the charge of a physician, a Dr. Adams. Through the physician's influence, he was installed in the family and care of Mr. Gillman, of Highgate. On the 15th of April he went to the Gillman house, and there he lived, watched and tenderly cared for by Mr. Gillman, for sixteen years. He gradually resumed in part his literary activity, not in verse, however, but in prose. The verse that he published in these years had been written during the golden time of his acquaintance with Wordsworth and before his taking of opium. His prose works appeared from time to time — *Lay Sermons*, *Sybilline Leaves*, *Biographia Literaria*, *The Aids to Reflection*, *Church and State*. More important was the influence of his personality and conversation during this period. The house in Highgate was frequented by the most notable of the younger men of the period and Coleridge became a kind of high priest of literary criticism. In a way his position corresponded to that of Dr. Johnson. H. N. Coleridge, his nephew, collected some specimens of his *Table Talk* remarkable for breadth of sympathy and knowledge of literature. After his death four volumes of *Literary Remains* were published. By his prose works Coleridge has become noted as the supreme critic of poetry in our English history.

Toward the end of his life most of his energies were devoted to metaphysics and theology.

WALTER SCOTT

During this year of 1805 Scott became a silent partner in the printing firm of James Ballan-

tyne and Company, and a few years later (1808) in the bookselling and publishing concern of John Ballantyne & Company. The connections thus formed were ultimately disastrous to him financially, and even from the beginning involved him in monumental literary labors which would not otherwise have been undertaken. Thus, between 1806 and 1812, to supply the firm, he published an eighteen-volume edition of Dryden, a nineteen-volume edition of Swift, the thirteen volumes of Somers's *Tracts* and the two volumes of *State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*.

His poetical work during this period was undertaken as a relief from his more serious burdens. *Marmion*, begun at the end of 1806 and published early in 1808, was an immense success, establishing Scott at the head of the living English poets in the opinion of the world. In 1810 appeared *The Lady of the Lake*, followed the next year by *The Vision of Don Roderick*, and by *Rokeby* and *The Bridal of Triermain* in 1813, and *The Lord of the Isles* in 1815.

Scott was at the height of his poetical career at the time of the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*. The later poems were not nearly so popular, and Scott's fame was eclipsed by the rising glories of Byron. Scott's poetry is not deeply imaginative or suggestive, but it has the strength of a good story well told. The action moves with stirring energy from incident to incident, the scenes are romantic, the style is simple and clear, the characters are vivid and heroic, and the lines are infused with a fervid glow of national feeling.

Scott turned from his poetry at this time to novel-writing. In 1805 he had begun *Waverley*, but had laid it aside after the opening chapters had been finished. Coming across the uncompleted manuscript one day as he was rummaging about for some fishing-tackle, he resolved to finish the story. He did this in a month of 1814 and published it anonymously in July of that year. This novel met with enormous success and huge sales, and encouraged him to continue in the same line. *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, *Kenilworth*, *The Pirate*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, *St. Ronan's Well*, and *Redgauntlet* constituted the remarkable output of the next decade. Scott was drawing upon the vast antiquarian store he had laid up in his younger days.

Something should be said of his private life during these years of public literary fame. In 1797 he married Charlotte Charpentier, a young lady of French parentage, and (1798) settled in a little cottage at Lasswade, about six miles from Edinburgh. Six years later he moved to Selkirkshire, of which he had been appointed sheriff, and lived in Ashestiel on the river Tweed, where all of his best poetry was written. With his appointment as Clerk of the Session (1812) and his assured income of sixteen hundred pounds a year, he indulged his cherished ideal of buying a country estate and living the life of a typical Scotch laird. He therefore bought Abbotsford, the estate on the Tweed with which his name will always be connected. He gradually acquired huge tracts of land, having spent, it is estimated, nearly thirty thousand pounds for that purpose alone. On this estate he dispensed hospitality with the liberal hand that, he thought, became a Scotch laird. In 1820 he was created a baronet, Sir Walter Scott, by the new king.

In the mean while his business partnership in the Ballantyne companies was giving him cause for serious worry. He trusted his partners blindly and bolstered up the staggering firms with the truly enormous sums he derived from the copyright and sales of his writings. The concerns were on the point of bankruptcy in 1813 and 1814, and were only saved by the popularity of *Waverley* and the novels that followed, and by the help of Constable, the great but daring London publisher. In 1818 the Ballantyne companies' affairs were wound up and their surplus stock sold to Constable. Scott, never questioning the details of the transaction, apparently imagined that he was cleared of all embarrassment, but he was disillusioned when Constable began to be in financial difficulties toward the end of 1825. In 1826 the crash came. All of Scott's fortune was swept away. Of the £150,000 which he had earned by his writings, not a penny was left, and he had to leave his beloved estate at Abbotsford, auction off his belongings, sell his house at Edinburgh, and go into lodgings. His wife died a few months later, and the

ged man took up the burden of life alone. At fifty-five he assumed a debt of £117,000 and bravely struggled to discharge it by his work.

Nothing in literary history is more tragic and affecting than the story of the remaining years of Scott's life. With dogged heroism he took up his work on *Woodstock*, a novel which had been dropped in the stress of financial trouble. In less than three months he finished it and sold it (1826) for £3228. He finished in 1827 his nine-volume *Life of Napoleon* and sold it for £18,000. He published *Chronicles of Canongate* (1827), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), and part of his two-volume *History of Scotland* (1829-30), besides a number of articles for the periodicals. Between 1826 and 1828 he earned £40,000 for his creditors, and would, had his health been spared, have been able in a few more years to have discharged his indebtedness in full. His exertions brought the attacks on his health, however; in November, 1830, he had a slight attack of apoplexy, and in April of 1831 a distinct stroke of paralysis. His mind failed him slightly and he was persuaded by his friends, who saw the necessity for a rest, that he had fully cleared off his debts. In this belief he agreed to take a sea voyage. The Government put a war-vessel at his disposal, and the doomed man for almost a year cruised in the Mediterranean and visited places of interest. When he felt that his death was near, he insisted on returning to his beloved Abbotsford. He passed into a state of coma on the way back, not to be aroused until he drew near his estate. At Abbotsford he died September 21, 1832, and was buried at Dryburgh Abbey. It is a pleasure to record that in 1847 his debts were wholly discharged by the value of the copyrights he had left and the estate at Abbotsford was cleared.

During his own lifetime the fame of Scott's poetical work was eclipsed by the popularity of his later prose romances, but as the years that have passed have thrown his whole literary career into a better perspective, the interest in and enthusiasm for his poetry has revived. Man after man has come forward to acknowledge the influence of the stirring *Marmion* and the romantic *Lady of the Lake* upon his life. "*The Lady of the Lake* was my especial favorite," writes Hamerton, "and I have no doubt that my early enthusiasm for that delightful poem implanted in me a love for beautiful lakes with romantic islands in them which had practical consequences afterwards. Even to this day these feelings are as lively in me as ever, so that nothing in the world seems to me so completely delightful as a lake if one has a sailing-boat to wander over it."

Scott's poetry is bracing. His active pen carried him from incident to incident in a stirring rush, and his vivid imagination peopled his scenes with the heroic figures of a bygone age. We do not read his poems for their historical accuracy, for he has melted his facts in a crucible in which has been burned away all that was ugly and coarse. We move in an idealized atmosphere from which the undeniable savagery, brutality, licentiousness, and frankness of speech has been purged away. We read of Border life as we should wish it to have been rather than as we know it was, and under the spell of the poet we are willing to accept the ideal for the real. And, after all, has he not thus served well the cause of poetry? With instinctive truth of vision he has pierced to the elements of nobility, valor, and honor that existed in the crude Scottish communities of ancient times and from those elements has constructed an idealized might-have-been. He is in his poetry truly, as some have claimed, the Homer of Scotland.

GEORGE GORDON BYRON

A MAN willing to expose his vices and unhappiness before a conventional world should have an unusually thick and insensitive skin, otherwise the inevitable discussion and criticism will cause him the most intense suffering. Byron, acutely sensitive by nature, spread his inmost life before the world, admitted his dissipations, his marital unhappiness, his faults of temper and disposition, and then, after recoiling at first with horror before the prudish and hypocritical censure of society, plunged again into dissipation in a futile attempt to forget. He never grew calloused, although his boasted vices were an attempt to seem so. He was at one moment a *poseur*, claiming crimes that he never committed for the joy of observing the effect upon the

world; he was at the next passionately and sincerely revealing his inmost suffering to the whole world, and declaiming against the injustice with which he was treated. He was a sensitive, impulsive, emotional child throughout his whole life, a person who to a lesser degree than most men learned the maxim inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi —

γνῶθι σεαυτὸν

George Gordon Byron was born January 22, 1788, in London. The Byron family was of Norman stock (the Buruns, recorded in the Domesday Book), and the Gordons, his mother's family, were descended from James I of Scotland. Byron's father, Captain John Byron, of the Horse Guards, was a practiced libertine. He first abducted the Marchioness of Carmarthen, whom he married after she had obtained her divorce, and soon after her death in 1784 married Catherine Gordon, supposed to be a great heiress. He squandered what fortune she had, deserted her, and, in 1791, died in France, leaving his wife and three-year-old boy to live on one hundred and fifty pounds a year. Catherine Gordon was a woman of shallow discernment, quick temper, inordinate vanity, and little sense. She alternately caressed and abused her son, at times falling into paroxysms of rage during which she pursued the child around the rooms trying to strike him with a poker. A more unpleasant picture of family life can scarcely be imagined than that which encircled Byron. He could conceive no respect for his father or affection for his mother. These influences, which during the most impressionable years of life moulded his character, must be held to excuse some of the faults that were only too notorious in later years.

His education was irregular. His natural sensitiveness was accentuated by a slight physical deformity, resembling club-foot, and his home surroundings made him rebellious and uncontrollable. At the age of ten he inherited from his great-uncle, the "wicked old lord," the Newstead estate and his title, and his nobility made him more intractable than ever. He was precocious in his affections, falling violently and apparently sincerely in love, first with Mary Duff in 1797, then with Margaret Parker (perhaps the "Thyrza" of his poems) in 1800, and again with Mary Anne Chaworth in 1803. After some desultory study under private masters and at Harrow, he went up, in 1805, to Trinity College, Cambridge. There his worst characteristics were displayed, his pride, conceit, ostentation, and above all his delight in shocking the conventional authorities by his unconventional conduct. He left the University in 1808 without taking a degree.

Even while he was at college he had taken his first initiation into poetry. During 1806 and 1807 he wrote, printed, and published a volume of poems, *Hours of Idleness*, which attracted indulgent attention from many of the reviews. The *Edinburgh Review*, however, criticised the poems harshly, so Byron took striking revenge in his famous satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, published March 1, 1809. Many of his charges were unjust and were so acknowledged later by Byron, but his satire attracted much notice and gained him a place in the literary world.

In April of 1808 he entered upon his inheritance with revels at Newstead; in March of 1809 he took his seat in the House of Lords, but, acutely sensitive as always, did not deem his reception sufficiently cordial; and early in July of the same year, with his devoted friend Hobhouse, he set out upon his continental travels.

He spent about two years abroad, mainly in the countries about the Mediterranean, especially Spain, Greece, Albania, Turkey, and Asia Minor. In later years many myths grew up around these travels, and Byron was reputed to be the hero of his own poetical romances. He returned to London in July of 1811, much embarrassed by debts, with a satire entitled *Hints from Horace*, a number of minor poems — as *To Florence*, *'The spell is broke, the charm is flown.'* *Maid of Athens* — and two cantos of *Childe Harold*. Murray, the publisher, accepted the last-named and issued it early in 1812.

Byron's remark, that he "awoke and found himself famous," expresses the result of this publication. The poem went through five editions in the year. Byron became the social favorite in London; the titled poet was courted everywhere. Susceptible women especially succumbed

to him, and his life was for a time a succession of more or less disgraceful intrigues. For a time he had an "affair" with Lady Caroline Lamb, wife of Lord Melbourne, from which he had the utmost difficulty in extricating himself. The flighty woman threw herself in his way at every opportunity and later involved him in her own disgrace. An intrigue with Lady Oxford followed, and another with Lady Frances Webster. He was a welcome guest at all the houses of the great, — Holland House, Lady Melbourne's, — he was a member of a dozen fashionable clubs, he numbered among his friends Moore, Rogers, and Campbell.

He was acute enough to take advantage in a literary way of his popularity. During these years he wrote with feverish haste a number of his narrative poems — *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* in 1813, *The Corsair* and *Lara* the next year, *Parisina* and *The Siege of Corinth*, written then but not published until 1816. Scott's contemporary verse romances were completely eclipsed. Of *The Corsair*, fourteen thousand copies were sold in one day.

In January, 1815, Byron married Miss Anne Isabella Milbanke, an heiress, and entitled in her own right to a peerage. How much Byron was influenced by his love for her and how much by his desire for her fortune will always remain a mooted question. It is noteworthy, however, that in after years Byron never spoke of her save with respect and affection. A few days over a year after the marriage, and five weeks after the birth of a daughter, Augusta Ada, Lady Byron left London, went to her father's house, and shortly afterward instituted proceedings for a legal separation. The true reasons for this separation will never be known. The monstrous charges made by Lady Byron in her old age are unproven and unprovable. It is probable that sufficient reasons are to be found in the mutual incompatibility between the erratic, emotional poet, and the conventional, perhaps somewhat prudish, wife.

The marriage and quick separation were the talk of London. Byron, from feelings of delicacy we should like to think, refused to shield himself by casting any blame upon his wife. His poems, *Fare Thee Well*, and *The Sketch*, purporting to represent his feelings at the time, were privately circulated and, in April, printed in a newspaper. Gradually public opinion turned against him. By the time the separation papers were signed, April 18, Byron was socially ostracized, and a week later he left England for the Continent with apparently the bitterest of feelings at the injustice with which he had been treated. In the short space of four years he had turned the full circle, from obscurity to renown, and from renown back to ostracism.

Byron's best poetical work lay before him. He traveled by way of the Rhine to Geneva where he joined the Shelleys and, during his intimacy with them, wrote some of his finest poetry. The third canto of *Childe Harold*, *Prometheus*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, two acts of *Manfred*, the *Stanzas to Augusta* (his beloved half-sister), and the *Epistle to Augusta*, were all composed here. It is a curious example of the volatile nature of the man that, fresh from his London disgrace, he contracted an intimacy with Jane Clairmont from which in December was born a natural daughter, Allegra.

Late in 1816 he left the Shelleys and went over the Alps to Italy, accompanied at first by his friend Hobhouse. He finally settled in Venice and there plunged into the lowest and most degrading dissipations. He seems to have taken a degenerate joy in writing accounts of these evils and intrigues to London, knowing, perhaps, that, spread along the electric wires of social gossip, they would scandalize London. He was to some extent redeemed from his miscellaneous debauchery by his liaison, beginning about 1819, with the young, beautiful, and accomplished Countess Guiccioli, who as his mistress for the next four years gave him all the love and care that could have been given by a devoted wife. From the end of 1819, indeed, the relations between Byron and the Countess were established on a recognized Italian basis, Byron being her *cavalier servente*. Even through these years of intrigue and dissipation, however, his splendid mind was busy, and his literary production great. He finished *Manfred*, wrote the *Lament of Tasso*, *Beppo* (1818), *Mazeppa* and two cantos of *Don Juan* (1819), three cantos of *Don Juan*, *Marino Falieri*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Cain* in 1821, *The Vision of Judgment* and *Werner* in 1822, the lyrical drama *Heaven and Earth*, *Morgante Maggiore*, and *The Island* in 1823, and *The Deformed Transformed* in 1824.

During his stay in Italy he had interested himself in the struggle of the Italians for freedom from the Austrian rule, had indeed mixed with the Carbonari and been made a chief of their fighting troops, and as a result had fallen under the suspicion of the Austrian police. In 1823 the brave struggle of the Greeks in the Morea for independence from Turkey attracted him and he gave money unstintingly to their cause. Early in 1824 he went to Greece and identified himself with the revolutionists, being received with honor by Mavrocordatos, the Greek chieftain, and made a commander-in-chief of a guard of Suliote troops.

This last exploit of Byron's life has done much to rehabilitate his character in the eyes of the world. However much he may have dreamed of spectacular glory, it is certain that during his few months in Greece he actually suffered much for the cause, and was of service in reconciling opposing factions. His actual life there was brief. He had hoped to lead troops in battle, but was not destined to do so. On April 11 he was seized with fever and on the 19th he died, amid the lamentations of all Greece. His body was carried to England, and, the Dean of Westminster refusing burial in the Abbey, was buried in the family vault of Hucknall-Torkard Church, near Newstead.

Byron was an unusually handsome and striking figure. Trelawny thus describes him: "He was . . . of middle height, five feet eight and a half inches; regular features, without a stain or furrow on his pallid skin, his shoulders broad, chest open, body and limbs finely proportioned. His small, highly finished head and curly hair had an airy and graceful appearance from the massiveness and length of his throat: you saw his genius in his eyes and lips. In short, nature could do little more than she had done for him, both in outward form and in the inward spirit she had given to animate it." And joined with these graces of person was a rare gift of personal magnetism. His sprightliness in conversation, his keen wit, his intuitional insight endeared him to those who came into intimate contact with him. His faults were notorious, in his lifetime, but time has done much to erase these from his memory. After his death his many notable charities, his high chivalry toward his wife during the trying period following her desertion of him when a word from him might have turned London society in his favor, his sincere devotion to the principle of freedom witnessed by his willingness to lay down his life for it, all combine to raise his fame in his own land and abroad. His life is a mass of irreconcilable contradictions; we cannot attempt to explain it, but we can, from this distance, forgive much that the conventional world of his own time could not forgive.

During the century that has followed his death many have attempted seriously to deny the reality of his poetic inspiration, but the verdict of posterity is being cast in his favor. Goethe once summed up Byron as follows: "Lord Byron is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman and as a great talent. His good qualities belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman; and the peer, his talent is incommensurable." Matthew Arnold, keenest of our English critics wrote that "these two, Wordsworth and Byron, stand, it seems to me, first and preëminent in actual performance, a glorious pair, among the English poets of this century."

The first characteristic of his poetry is its energy. None can read Byron to the end without standing amazed before the impelling sweep of his thought, the facility and force of his expression, and the vitality that breathes through his lines. Granted that he was many times a poet, granted that his egotism, vanity, and misanthropy intrude themselves often in his poems, yet we must acknowledge an intellectual grasp and vision, a sincerity in his hatred of hypocrisy and cant, an imaginative conception granted to but few poets in the history of the world. He spread before us his inmost thoughts and emotions with an intimacy which not even Mrs. Browning has surpassed, and we who read to-day are willing to recognize, through the contradictions, faults, and vanities, the innate genius of the man.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

OF poets of revolt, of the "Satanic school" as Southey said, none was more delicate, ethereal, and divinely inspired than Shelley. Because of his fiery independence of spirit he revolted against the bonds of custom and convention and gained for himself among his contemporaries an undeserved reputation for gross immorality, but with the passage of a century, the innate purity of his life and motives has been recognized. Historical perspective has thrown into their proper relations many of the incidents once magnified beyond all reason.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born August 4, 1792, at an old-fashioned country house called Field Place, near Horsham, in Sussex. His father, Timothy Shelley, was the son and heir of Sir Bysshe Shelley, Bart, and was Member of Parliament for the constituency of Shoreham. His mother, Elizabeth Pilfold, was of a good Surrey family, and was herself beautiful and capable, but not notably literary.

As a child Shelley was sensitive, impetuous, and highly imaginative. His brothers and sisters, all younger than he, have recorded for us incidents peculiarly valuable in revealing his imaginative and romantic nature, as his description of the nearby wood inhabited by a dragon and a headless specter, of the huge turtle in the pond, of the wise old snake in the garden, of the alchemist in the garret. After primary education at schools in the neighborhood, he went to Eton at twelve, where he gained the sobriquets of "Mad Shelley" and "Shelley the atheist," and was not popular either with masters or with his schoolmates. He left Eton at eighteen and entered University College, Oxford.

Shelley had already shown his decided bent toward literature. In his childhood he had scribbled verses with ease, and while he was still in Eton he published two wild prose romances, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian*, reflections of the Mrs. Radcliffe school. At the time of his matriculation at Oxford he had poems in the hands of publishers. He showed thus early the impetuous hurry which characterized him through life, the tendency to ignore solid facts and logic in the sweep of his impulses and his imagination, to rush into print with his immature work and half-formed theories.

Shelley's stay at the University was very brief. With a friend, Hogg, as his confidant, he printed anonymously a little pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism*, an argument that neither reason nor testimony adequately establishes the existence of a deity, and sent it broadcast to invite discussion. The authorities at the College traced the authorship to him, and expelled him and his friend March 25, 1811.

Shelley went to London. He found himself in desperate straits. His father, scandalized at his action, demanded that he return home, study, apologize to the Oxford authorities, and profess conformity to the Church. His allowances were cut off and he lived for a time on contributions from his sisters, secretly conveyed to him by a mutual friend, Miss Harriet Westbrook. Shelley refused to recant, and not until six weeks later was a reconciliation effected on the basis that Shelley should receive two hundred pounds a year and complete independence of action and thought. The acquiescence of the rather stubborn conventional father to these terms was due to the fact that Shelley was in direct line for the baronetcy, and was, therefore, a person of considerable importance.

Shelley's impetuous nature was shortly to involve him in more serious difficulties. The pretty intermediary during his six weeks in London, Harriet Westbrook, had fallen entirely under Shelley's proselyting influence, professed atheism, and rebelled against a return to school. She threw herself upon Shelley's protection, and he, really inspired by the purest and highest motives, eloped with her and married her in Edinburgh August 28, 1811. His conduct was highly honorable from every point of view, but the two were singularly ill-mated. His wife was beautiful, sweet-tempered, and well-bred, albeit she was the daughter of an innkeeper, but was wholly unable to "feel poetry and understand philosophy." These failings, not serious in the wife of an ordinary man, were fatal for the happiness of Shelley.

The marriage bond held Shelley for about three years, but the continual bickering that arose between his wife and him proved intolerable at last. It must be remembered, in order to understand rightly the succeeding events, that Shelley's pronounced principles were wholly out of accord with the rules of society and the laws of his country. Marriage was to him merely a convention, not to be held sacred or inviolable. When he met a woman who could more intimately enter into a spiritual communion with him than could his wife, he held that, except for arbitrary conventions of society, he was free to accept such communion. In his mind he was violating no sacred law. Such a woman he met in Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. She was imbued as he was with atheistic principles and contempt for social convention. July 28, 1814, Shelley and she and Jane Clairmont, a half-sister, left the Godwin house, crossed to Calais, and went to Switzerland, all three prepared to ignore social conventions and accept the consequences. In January of 1815, upon the death of Sir Bysshe Shelley, the poet, as the prospective heir to his father, came immediately into possession of a good income.

In November of 1816, Harriet Shelley drowned herself in the Serpentine. Shelley had remained on good terms with her and had given her a liberal allowance for her needs, but she herself had formed a connection with some other man and had also become intemperate. Disappointment, disgrace, remorse, some ill-treatment at home, and an hereditary predisposition toward suicide combined to drive her to this fatal step. Shelley, though deeply shocked and grieved, never held himself in any way responsible. In December of 1816, all obstacles to the legal union of Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin being removed by Harriet's death, the marriage was performed.

Shelley now settled in Buckinghamshire and undertook to recover his children from the Westbrooks, but his right to do so was contested in the Chancery Court on the ground that Shelley had deserted his wife and would educate his children in his own atheistic and anti-social opinions. Judgment was given against Shelley, and the children were put under the guardianship of Dr. Hume, an orthodox army surgeon nominated by Shelley, the poet contributing liberally to their support.

In March, 1818, Shelley, frightened by what he believed to be serious lung trouble, moved his whole household to Italy, where he spent the remainder of his life. He migrated from place to place, — Milan, Leghorn, Venice, Rome, Naples, Florence, Pisa, — and in 1822 was living on the Casa Magni on the Gulf of Spezia. Much of the time there Shelley spent sailing in the little skiff, *Don Juan*, with his friend Williams. Early in July they set out across the gulf to meet Leigh Hunt at Leghorn. On the 8th they left Leghorn for the return trip. Days passed and nothing was heard of them. Trelawney, who had watched them sail out of Leghorn Harbor, rode in person along the shore toward Via Reggio searching for evidences of a wreck. At that place he found a water-keg and some bottles which had been in the boat. On the 18th, Shelley's body was cast up on the sand, "with the volume of *Æschylus* in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other, doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away. On the 6th of August, the body was taken from the sand which had covered it and cremated at the spot in compliance with the requirements of the law. "The heat from the sun and fire was so intense that the atmosphere was tremulous and wavy," writes Trelawney; "the fire was so fierce as to produce a white heat on the iron, and to reduce its contents to gray ashes. The only portions that were not consumed were some fragments of bones, the jaw and skull; but what surprised us all was that the heart remained entire. In snatching this relic from the fiery furnace, my hand was severely burnt." His ashes were carried to Rome and buried there in the little Protestant cemetery with the following inscription: —

"Percy Bysshe Shelley, Cor Cordium, Natus iv. Aug. M.CC.XII. Obiit viii Jul. MDCCCXXII.

"Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

During his short and very eventful life as outlined above, Shelley had established himself as the greatest lyric poet who has written in English. *Queen Mab* was published when he was

Twenty-one, *Alastor* in 1816, *The Revolt of Islam* in 1817, but all of Shelley's finest work was done during the four short years in Italy from 1818 to 1822. His genius had passed through its apprenticeship and matured rapidly. Of his longer poems, *Rosalind and Helen* was finished at Lucca in August, 1818; *Julian and Maddalo* (a reflection of the companionship with Byron), the lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*, perhaps his masterpiece, and his terrible tragedy, *The Cenci*, in 1819; *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*, in 1821. Of the lyrics, practically all that we have retained as most characteristic of his genius were written during this period. *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills* was composed at Este in October of 1818; *The Ode to the West Wind* and *The Indian Serenade*, in 1819; *The Cloud*, and "I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden," in 1820; *To Night*, "Music, when soft voices die," "One word is too often profaned," "O world! O life! O time!" in 1821; and "When the lamp is shattered" and *A Dirge*, in 1822.

Shelley will always be to the discerning lover of poetry a shining example of success in failure, of an Arthur struggling for an ideal, failing, and yet supremely great in his failure. For Shelley sought to fix the delicate, intangible fancies that flit almost imperceptibly before our imaginations. Words are too crude a medium for this purpose: only music can approach success. Shelley was foredoomed to failure in his attempt. "Mr. Shelley's style," wrote William Hazlitt in his criticism of the *Posthumous Poems*, "is to poetry what astrology is to natural science — a passionate dream, a straining after impossibilities, a record of fond conjectures, a confused embodying of vague abstractions, — a fever of the soul, thirsting and craving after what it cannot have, indulging its love of power and novelty at the expense of truth and nature, associating ideas by contraries, and wasting great powers by their application to unattainable objects." And yet, with due respect for Hazlitt's opinion, to the minds of many of us Shelley's great powers were not "wasted." His poetry strikes within us a chord which none but the greatest sound. We, too, have had our ideals, our impalpable

Fancies that broke through language and escaped; —

our visions too filmy to be expressed in rough words, yet none the less real and precious. To us his poetry seems to have been the direct breath of a soul; as Macaulay says, "not to have been an art, but an inspiration."

JOHN KEATS

WHEN genius has flowered in a man of letters, it is always customary to look back to parents or environment for the seeds and cultivation. In one man's father we note unusual force of character, marked piety, or the like; in another's mother we hear of a vivid imagination and a mind stored with old wives' tales; and to said fathers or mothers we may trace respectively the deep and scathing satire of one poet or the romantic fancies of another. No biographer has succeeded, however, in identifying in the parentage and early environment of Keats the germs of the love of beauty and delicacy of touch that distinguished him in an era of great poets.

John Keats was born October 29 (or October 31), 1795. His father, Thomas Keats, had come as a boy to London and worked his way up to the place of head hostler in the Swan and Hoop livery-stable, kept by a Mr. John Jennings. The head hostler married Frances Jennings, daughter of his employer, and, upon the retirement of his father-in-law immediately after, took over the business. The newly married couple lived at the stable, and it was in their rooms there that John, their first child, was born.

In 1804, Thomas Keats was killed by a fall from a horse and less than a year later the widow married William Rawlings, apparently the successor to her husband in the ownership of the livery-stable. In 1806, she left her husband and, with her children, went to live with her mother, Mrs. Jennings, at Edmonton. The stepfather, Rawlings, seems to have passed out of the knowledge and lives of the children after this time.

The family was by no means left in poverty after the death of the father. Mr. Jennings had,

upon his death in 1805, left thirteen thousand pounds from which provision was made for his wife and daughter. There was enough to permit the children to have a good education with the possibility of preparation for a profession. John and his two brothers were sent to a little private school at Enfield kept by John Clarke, where John formed a friendship with Charles Cowden Clarke, the head master's son. Keats was a bright, active, vivacious student, very pugnacious on occasions, and a natural leader among his schoolmates. During his last years at school, 1809 and 1810, all the energy of his nature seems to have turned by some inward impulse toward reading. He was at his books from morning to night, giving up the athletics of which he had been so fond and delighting in literature.

His mother died in 1810 and his guardians, desiring to train him for a profession, removed him from school in the same year and apprenticed him to Thomas Hammond, a surgeon at Edmonton. We know little of the years of this apprenticeship, except that, being near his old school, he often walked over to see Cowden Clarke and exchanged books with him, reading especially during these days Spenser and the Elizabethans. Charles Brown, intimate friend during the closing years of Keats's short life, is authority for the statement that Keats owed his own inspiration to write verse wholly to his soul-awakening upon reading Spenser. "In Spenser's fairyland," says Brown, "he was enchanted, breathed in a new world, and became another being; till, enamoured of the stanza, he attempted to imitate it, and succeeded. . . . This, his earliest attempt, the *Imitation of Spenser*, is in his first volume of poems."

In 1814, after a quarrel, the indentures of apprenticeship were canceled by mutual consent and Keats went to London to continue the study of his profession in Guy's and St. Thomas's hospitals, but his chief interest had already come to be poetry. Clarke had settled in London and Keats's intimate friendship with him was renewed. It was after a night's enthusiastic study of Chapman's Homer that Keats sent his friend the famous sonnet, "*Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold.*" On another occasion early in 1816, Clarke showed some of Keats's manuscript poems to Leigh Hunt and brought the poet and Hunt together. Through Hunt Keats became acquainted with Shelley, Reynolds (a young man of promise who became one of his close friends and admirers), and the painter Haydon, whose fiery ardor struck an answering enthusiasm from the poet. Keats's friendships and the encouragement he received from those to whom his poetry was shown drew him further and further from his hospital work, so that in the winter of 1816 and 1817 he definitely abandoned his profession. In March, 1817, the *Poems by John Keats* were published, with a dedicatory sonnet to Leigh Hunt.

Despite occasional purple patches, the poems of 1817 deserved the neglect with which they were received, — a cordial but just appreciation in Hunt's *Examiner*, the enthusiasm of a few friends, a fair sale for a fortnight, and then oblivion. Apparently George Keats, the poet's brother, was inclined to blame the publisher for the chilly reception accorded to the little volume. We have the letter written by the publishers, C. and J. Ollier, to George Keats: —

"Sir, — We regret that your brother ever requested us to publish this book, or that our opinion of its talent should have led us to acquiesce in undertaking it. We are, however, much obliged to you for relieving us from the unpleasant necessity of declining any further connexion with it, which we must have done, as we think the curiosity is satisfied, and the sale has dropped. By far the greater number of persons who have purchased it from us have found fault with it in such plain terms, that we have in many cases offered to take the book back rather than be annoyed with the ridicule which has, time after time, been showered upon it. In fact, it was only on Saturday last that we were under the mortification of having our own opinion of its merits flatly contradicted by a gentleman, who told us he considered it 'no better than a take in.' These are unpleasant imputations for any one in business to labour under, but we should have borne them and concealed their existence from you had not the style of your note shewn us that such delicacy would be quite thrown away. We shall take means without delay for ascertaining the number of copies on hand, and you shall be informed accordingly."

Keats himself, before the full knowledge of the success or failure of his poems could be realized, went for rest and study to the Isle of Wight, from which he wrote to his friend Reynolds:

"I find I cannot do without poetry — without eternal poetry; half the day will not do it — the whole of it. I began with a little, but habit had made me a leviathan. . . . I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*, which I hope I shall have got some way with before you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon, near the Castle."

Endymion: a Poetic Romance, was published in the spring of 1818. Its imperfections Keats himself discerned, — "I would write the subject thoroughly again but I am tired of it, and think the time would be better spent in writing a new romance," — and in his preface he acknowledges to the public his dissatisfaction with the results of his work, but his humility did not save him from the savage onslaughts of the reviewers. The poet was known to be a friend of Hunt, so that the *Quarterly* ranged him as a "puling satellite of the arch-offender and King of Cockaigne, Hunt," and advised his return "to plasters, pills, and ointment-boxes." The poem has lived to confute these bitter criticisms. Faulty as it is in many ways, it has survived by virtue of the law set forth in its opening verse —

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

Keats was too much occupied just at this time to feel the full sting of the *Quarterly's* attack, for his brother George was setting out for America to try his fortune and his brother Tom was sickening with the same disease which later carried off the poet himself. He tenderly cared for his sick brother during the last months of the illness and after the death early in December, he went to live and share expenses with his friend Brown at Hampstead. At Brown's house he again became absorbed in his poetry, working at this time upon *Hyperion*.

During this same period the one great love-influence came into Keats's life. He became completely fascinated with Fanny Brawne, the daughter of a widow in the neighborhood. By his friends his choice was considered unfortunate, for the independent, self-confident girl of seventeen was wholly unfitted to be a fit mate for the delicate, sensitive poet. His experience was certainly an unhappy one. The condition of his finances was such that marriage could be considered only a remote possibility, and a little later the unmistakable signs in him of the consumption that had carried off his brother removed even this possibility. He was mentally tortured between his love for Miss Brawne, his anguish at the realization that marriage was impossible, and intense jealousy at the thought of any one else aspiring to her. He was alternately raised high in hope and cast into the deepest dejection.

And yet, unhappy and disturbed as he was at this time, he did his best work between the summer of 1818 and the spring of 1820. The poems of this period were published in July of the latter year, *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and *Other Poems*, including the *Ode: Bards of Passion and of Mirth*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, *Ode to Psyche*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Lamia*, and *To Autumn*. On February 3, 1820, his grave condition, suspected for a year previous, became evident to him when he saw a drop of blood from his mouth: "It is arterial blood — I cannot be deceived in that color . . ." he said to his friend Brown; "I must lie."

He was warned that he could not survive another winter in England, so, very reluctantly, he set out, September 18, for Naples, accompanied by an artist friend, Joseph Severn. The two friends went to Rome and settled in the Piazza di Spagna. There, on the 23d of February, Keats died. Four days later he was buried in the Protestant cemetery near the pyramid of Caius Sestius.

In thinking of Keats's poetry, we return to what he wrote his friend Reynolds: "I find I cannot do without poetry — without eternal poetry; half the day will not do it — the whole of it." No poet was more fully absorbed in poetry than Keats. To him it was a passion, it was life itself. His was a mind peculiarly susceptible to beauty, beauty in the external world, beauty of thought and imagination, and beauty of language. As he was fed upon the Elizabethans in his youth and his young manhood, so his poetry, with its richness of imagination and its beauty of expression, takes us back to Spenser and Shakespeare. To Matthew Arnold, Keats is "the poet, who evidently caught from Spenser his sweet and easy-slipping movement, and who has

exquisitely employed it; a Spenserian genius, nay, a genius by natural endowment, richer probably than even Spenser; . . . an Elizabethan born too late." His life was short, his quantity of poetry was very small, but the quality of his poetry, of his best poetry, is of the highest order. "He would have been among the very greatest of us if he had lived," said Tennyson; "there's something of the innermost soul of poetry in almost everything he ever wrote."

MATTHEW ARNOLD

MATTHEW ARNOLD, oldest son and second child of Thomas Arnold, the famous head master of Rugby, was born at Laleham, near Staines, December 24, 1822. Dr. Thomas Arnold, himself a writer, was one of the noblest and most accomplished characters of his age, endowed with an earnestness and sincerity that made him all through his life a great force for good. Mary Penrose, Matthew Arnold's mother, the youngest daughter of the Reverend John Penrose, rector of Fledborough in Nottinghamshire, was a woman of striking beauty and unusual dignity of appearance, as well as of fine education and natural ability. Until her death Matthew kept up with her an affectionate and sympathetic correspondence. At the time of Matthew Arnold's birth his father was three years out of Oxford tutoring pupils for the University. Thomas Arnold was not appointed head master of Rugby until 1828.

If ever a man were in danger of being spoiled by overmuch education, Matthew Arnold was that man. Brought up in strictly conventional albeit high-minded environment, at school at Laleham from eight until he was fourteen, at Winchester two years, at Rugby four (1837-41), winning a scholarship at Oxford in 1840 and matriculating at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1841, Arnold ran the risk of having all of his native genius snuffed out by the powerful influences of the formal academic training. Advantageous as such training undoubtedly is in most respects, it cannot be doubted that strict academic bonds tend in many cases to cramp original impulse during a youth's most impressionable years. What Arnold might have been under different circumstances it would be rash to conjecture: we can marvel that he rose to such heights as he did.

Of his college days we know little. He had written verses even before he went to Oxford, having won a Rugby prize with a poem entitled *Alaric at Rome*, and at Oxford he won the Needgate prize by a poem entitled *Cromwell*. Neither poem is noteworthy. Among his friends at college were John, Duke Coleridge, later Lord Chief Justice, and J. C. Shairp, later Principal of United College, St. Andrew's. His quick intellect and (on the testimony of his brother) his fashionable dressing made him popular among a certain set: "His Olympian manners," writes Max Müller, "began even at Oxford; there was no harm in them, they were natural, not put on. The very sound of his voice and the wave of his arm were Jove-like." In the final examination for classical honors Arnold was in the second class, but in the next spring (1846) he was elected to a fellowship at Oriel.

Upon leaving Oxford — he did not relish the life of a don — he taught for a short time at Rugby, then in 1847 became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and in 1851 received from Lord Lansdowne an appointment as Inspector of Schools. He retained this inspectorship thirty-five years, conscientiously performing the duties of the position until his resignation in 1886. In June of 1851, a few months after his appointment, he married Frances Lucy Wightman, daughter of an excellent and highly respected judge of the queen's bench, afterwards Sir William Wightman.

In the mean while Arnold had published over the initial "A." a little volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (1849). As with so many first volumes, it received no attention and was withdrawn from circulation after a few copies had been sold. The poetry-reading public, usually few in numbers, were engrossed in the rising fame of Tennyson and Browning, or looked back to the best work of the still-living Wordsworth and Rogers. The poems themselves in this little volume, including *The Strayed Reveller*, *Mycerinus*, *The Sick King in Bokhara*,

The Forsaken Merman, and *Resignation*, deserved recognition: in later years all but one were reprinted and they are part of the standard editions of Arnold to-day.

Three years later (1852) when he was a man of thirty, Arnold's second volume of verse was published, *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*, by "A." The reception of this volume was as unsatisfactory as that of the first, although it contained besides the *Empedocles*, *Tristram and Isolt*, *A Summer Night, On the Rhine*, *Absence*, *The Buried Life*, *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann*, and *Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*. Before fifty copies had been sold, this volume was, like the first, withdrawn.

Arnold had, however, found himself as a poet, and the next year (1853) he published a new volume, containing a republication of many poems of previous volumes, adding a number of new pieces, and subscribing for the first time his own name on the title-page — "Poems by Matthew Arnold, a new edition." Among the new pieces which first appeared in this 1853 volume were *Sohrab and Rustum*, *Requiescat*, and *The Scholar Gipsy*. In 1855 was published *Poems by Matthew Arnold*, second series, containing only two new poems, *Balder Dead*, and *Separation*.

With the publication of the 1853 volume and its successor in 1855, Arnold's reputation became established. The excellent critical preface to the former volume had attracted attention, too, by its clear enunciation of sound principles of his art. The practical recognition of his position came in the form of his election in 1857 to the professorship of poetry at Oxford.

Arnold held this professorship for a decade, but during that time did not identify himself especially with the University life. He did not care for the title "Professor" and did not reside at Oxford: he delivered a few lectures, enjoyed the remuneration (less than one hundred pounds a year), and published a little additional poetry. In 1858, when he entered upon the position, he published his tragedy, *Merops*, but the cold, frigid, reflective style made this a failure. The lyric inspiration came to him more and more seldom as the years went by. In November of 1857, he wrote *Rugby Chapel*; in 1859, *A Southern Night*; in 1861, *Thyrsis* (on the death of his friend Clough); and in 1881, *Westminster Abbey* (on the death of Dean Stanley).

With the decrease of inspirational poetry, however, came a notable flow of reflective criticism. The publication of certain of the lectures delivered at Oxford insured him a high place as a brilliant and subtle critic. *On Translating Homer* appeared first in 1861, and *On the Study of Celtic Literature* in 1867.

His official duties as Inspector of Schools continued through these years. Although the routine of the work at times wearied him, he devoted much of his best energies to the work. He welcomed his assignments to study the educational systems of continental countries and his reports *Popular Education of France, with Notices of that of Holland and Switzerland* (1861), *On Secondary Education in Foreign Countries* (1866) show how thoroughly he exerted himself in his duties. His fame as poet and critic lead us now to forget the thirty-five years of steady routine toil in the educational work of the kingdom.

Arnold's work in reflective criticism continued during these years. His powers were well shown in the series, *Essays in Criticism*, published in 1865 and in *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869. Here he attacked the stolid English "philistine" indifference to ideas in the realms of literature, politics, and religion. Between 1870 and 1877 he produced a number of essays on religion — *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), *God and the Bible* (1875), and *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877). His interest in poetry continued, though he wrote little himself, and he edited some of Johnson's "Lives," *Selections from Wordsworth* (1879), *Selections from Byron* (1881), and wrote the general introduction to Ward's selections from *The English Poets*. In 1883 his literary eminence was rewarded by a pension of two hundred and fifty pounds a year from the Civil List, upon the receipt of which he retired from his inspectorship.

Of Arnold's private life we know very little. He discouraged all efforts to gain biographical material. His married life was continuously happy, and his affection for his family peculiarly tender and sweet. The satire with which he attacked the lethargic philistine of his own times exposed him to charges of snobbery and priggishness, but his friends have recorded touchingly their evidence to his purity and gentleness of character. "I believe that a more blameless, nay.

a more admirable, man in every relation never lived. He was one of the noblest and most perfect characters I have ever known, and I have known him sixty years," wrote Lord Coleridge. "Certain it is that Mr. Arnold's superiority of mien gave offense in some directions, appearing to be regarded as a kind of involuntary criticism. In addition to this, his lofty mental attitude and gravity of demeanor were by some felt to be oppressive, and were misconstrued as pride. Yet proud, in a narrow and selfish sense, Arnold was not. His nature, full of dignity, was yet gentle and singularly sweet, and his interest in the masses was sympathetic and sincere," wrote Florence Earl Coates.

Arnold's end came suddenly and with no warning. His general health had always been good, though his physicians had warned him of hereditary weakness of the heart. April 15, 1888, he was at Liverpool with his wife, planning to meet his daughter as she landed from the steamer. He ran to catch a car, the exertion brought on heart failure, and he died at once.

Arnold never gave in his poetry the impression of being divinely inspired to write. In all his poetical work we can find nothing hastily thrown off in the heat of emotion. He was not endowed with that fine frenzy of which we hear so much. And yet, the quiet, calm, restrained poetry appeals to us. The dignity of the man, the highly cultivated soul of him, shows through the clear direct verse. His poetry is academic, it is true, it smells of the lamp, but it still has a charm. The refinement of language, the subtlety and discrimination of taste, the perfection of form, the reflective spirit, all combine to insure for Matthew Arnold a certain immortality in the minds of lovers of poetry.

ALFRED TENNYSON

It is safe to prophesy that in the perspective of the history of English poetry Tennyson will stand out above his contemporaries as the representative poet of his age. His life compasses all but a few years of the nineteenth century; his work has appealed not to a clique or a restricted circle, but to all classes of readers; his ideals, feelings, and instincts are, more than those of any other poet of the century, typical of the conventional gentleman of his time. New and startling ideas or expressions we seldom find in Tennyson, but we do find a full expression of the mental, emotional, and spiritual life of his contemporaries.

The incidents of his life are in no way sensational. He was always a quiet, retiring man, deeply devoted to his family, and, even in the days of his greatest fame, sincerely desirous of avoiding attention. He has been called unsocial, perhaps because he shunned notoriety. When his house had become the mecca of enthusiasts, he preferred to flee to the secluded parts of his land to escape their attention. He used to show to a favored few the tree overhanging his garden which Americans climbed to get a glimpse of him in his walks. He was in a rage at girls who sought his autographs. And yet, friend after friend has testified to the genial cordiality and simplicity of his conversation among his intimates. He got along splendidly with crusty Carlyle, he was devoted to FitzGerald, and his *In Memoriam* reveals better than any words can describe the positive passion of friendship of which he was capable.

Alfred Tennyson, the fourth of the twelve children of the Reverend George Tennyson, was born at Somersby, Lincolnshire, August 6, 1809. His father was rector of the parish, a man of more than usual ability, a linguist, with some talent in poetry, in painting, and in music. His mother, Elizabeth Fytche, the daughter of a clergyman, was noted about the countryside for her kindness of heart: "The wicked inhabitants of a neighboring village used to bring their dogs to her windows and beat them in order to be bribed to leave off by the gentle lady, or to make advantageous bargains by selling her the worthless curs."

The family life was unusually happy. The twelve children grew up in this remote village and invented for themselves romantic games. "The boys played great games, like Arthur's knights: they were champions and warriors defending a stone heap; or, again, they would set up opposing camps with a king in the midst of each. . . . When dinner-time came, and they all sat around the

table, each in turn put a chapter of his history underneath the potato-bowl, — long endless histories, chapter after chapter, diffuse, absorbing, unending, as are the stories of real life of which each sunrise opens on a new part.”¹

Tennyson's education was begun at Louth Grammar School, where he remained five years between 1815 and 1820, and continued under his father's tuition at Somersby until he was ready for college. His school life at Louth was always a black remembrance to him, — “How I did hate that school,” he once said later, — but his years at home were peculiarly valuable. Not only did he profit by his father's direction of his studies, but by his access to the large, well-selected library and by the leisure to indulge his tastes. He had already shown a bent for poetry. His juvenile poems reveal an unusual excellence. In 1827, while he was still studying at home, a little volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers* contained the verse of Alfred and Charles Tennyson. The poems were brought out anonymously and received little attention.

In February of 1828 the “Two Brothers” matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. At first shy and without friends, they gradually became intimate with a little group of their fellows, including Richard Trench (later Archbishop of Dublin), James Spedding, Edward FitzGerald, Frederick Maurice (later the great liberal preacher), and Arthur Hallam. Alfred was looked upon already by these friends as a young poet of promise. In 1829 he won the Chancellor's prize medal by a poem entitled *Timbuctoo*, the first instance of the winning of this prize by a poem in blank verse. A year later he published a volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, which revealed by such lyrics as *Mariana*, *The Poet*, *Oriana* a mastery of melody and sincere love of beauty through occasional crudities of metrical construction (as in *Madeline* and *Adeline*).

A peculiar break in Tennyson's life was his enlistment (1830) with Hallam in the cause of the Spanish insurgents under Torrijos. His short campaign in Spain, unrelieved by the excitement of meeting an enemy, left upon him a lasting love for the Pyrenees. In the valley of Canterey he wrote part of the supremely beautiful *Enone*.

In 1831, Tennyson, at the news of his father's serious illness, left Cambridge without taking his degree and returned to Somersby. A few days after his return his father died. The Tennysons continued to live at the rectory, however, for six years more, Alfred remaining there absorbed in his work. At the end of 1832 appeared his new volume, simply entitled *Poems*, containing a number of the lyrical masterpieces, as *The Lady of Shalott*, *Enone*, and *The Lotus Eaters*, upon which Tennyson's fame rests. In this volume the true poet was at his best. Unhappily his genius was not recognized by the reviewers and he suffered, as had so many of his predecessors, from a savage attack in the *Quarterly*. Tennyson, always acutely sensitive to adverse criticism, was literally overwhelmed and, had it not been for the entreaties of his friends, might indeed have abandoned poetry entirely. For ten years thereafter he published nothing.

A great sorrow came to Tennyson in September of 1833 by the sudden death of Arthur Hallam. Combined with the *Quarterly* attack, this loss affected his health. He lost much of the robust strength which had been his and retired more and more into the seclusion of his own thoughts. He tried to grow hardened and indifferent to popular fame, and devoted himself heart and soul to the perfection of his poetry. In the next few years he wrote some of his finest verse and meditated long over the beginnings of *In Memoriam* and *Idylls of the King*.

Tennyson's popular fame dates from the two-volume edition of *Poems* with which in 1842 he broke his ten-years' silence. Together with many of his former lyrics revised, this collection included a number of the popular studies of English home-life, as *The Gardener's Daughter* and *The Lord of Burleigh*, as well as a more enduring class of poems like *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, *Sir Galahad*, and *Morte d'Arthur*. The poems took the fancy of all classes, and Tennyson received what his son has called a “chorus of favorable reviews.” The effect of his success upon Tennyson himself was immeasurable. Although his finances were low and his hopes of gaining a sufficient livelihood by his poems still might seem small, all idea of doing anything else was henceforth out of the question. The applause of the multitude and of the critics, however much

¹ Mrs. Ritchie, *Records of Tennyson*, *Bushin*, *Browning*.

he may have thought he had steeled himself to indifference, reacted most favorably upon him.

The 1842 volume won for him the friendship of those few rare souls with whom he was best fitted to commune. His old friends, Spedding, Trench, Milnes, and the rest always continued his friends, but he became well known in a wider circle. "I saw Tennyson, when I was in London, several times. *He is decidedly the first of our living poets*, and I hope will live to give the world still better things," wrote Wordsworth in 1845. And Carlyle testified his admiration and devotion: in a letter to Emerson in 1844 he wrote: "Alfred is one of the few British or Foreign Figures (a not increasing number I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me; — a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! . . . One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusty-dark hair; bright-laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of *sallow-brown* complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; — smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic, — fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe."

By an unhappy investment Tennyson was reduced to poverty a few years after his 1842 volume had won such general recognition of worth, but this poverty was relieved in 1845 by a government pension of two hundred pounds a year. After that time his poetry, too, began to bring him in a moderate income, so that thenceforth the poet, though never a very wealthy man, was without financial worries.

In 1850 he married Emily Sellwood, to whom he had been long engaged. The alliance was ideally happy: "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I married her," he said long afterwards. Tennyson's son bears witness to her loving devotion to her husband: "It was she who became my father's adviser in literary matters. 'I am proud of her intellect,' he wrote. With her he always discussed what he was working at; she transcribed his poems: to her, and to no one else, he referred for a final criticism before publishing. She, with her 'tender spiritual nature' and instinctive nobility of thought, was always by his side, a ready, cheerful, courageous, wise, and sympathetic counsellor."

In November of 1850, after the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson's position in contemporary poetry was recognized by his appointment to the laureateship. It is said that Lord Russell submitted to the queen the names of Professor Wilson, Henry Taylor, Sheridan Knowles, and Tennyson, and that Victoria was influenced in her choice of Tennyson by the admiration which the prince consort expressed for *In Memoriam*. In view of the subsequent fame of the various candidates, any other choice would have seemed absurd. Tennyson himself complained that his accession brought upon him "such shoals of poems that I am almost crased with them; the two hundred million poets of Great Britain deluge me daily. Truly the Laureateship is no sinecure."

Outside of the publication of his successive volumes of poems his subsequent years of life were without noteworthy incident. In 1851 he made a trip to Italy and in 1853 he leased a little house and farm called Farringford, near the town of Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight. Later he bought this property, where he lived quietly for fourteen years. His constantly growing fame attracted such crowds of sight-seers that in 1867 he reluctantly left Farringford for a little estate near Haslemere where he built a country house called Aldworth. He was offered a baronetcy by Gladstone in 1873 and by Disraeli in 1874, but it was not until ten years later that he was prevailed upon to accept the honor — "For my own part," said he, "I shall regret my simple name all my life." March 11, 1884, he took his seat in the House of Lords as the first Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford. His health began to fail in his eighty-fourth year, although his mind remained clear to the end. He died peacefully at his home, Aldworth, October 6, 1892. He was buried with great ceremony in Westminster Abbey, October 12.

During these many years without noteworthy incident, his poetic faculty had been continuously exerted. A mere record of his productions will serve to show his industry and the high quality of his work: *The Princess* (1847); *In Memoriam* (1850); *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852); *Maud and Other Poems* (1855); 2d edition revised and enlarged (1856); *Idylls*

the King, including Enid, Vivien, Elaine, and Guinevere (1859); *Enoch Arden* (1864); four ore of the *Idylls, The Coming of Arthur, Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettarre, and The Passing of Arthur* (1869); the drama *Queen Mary* (1875); the drama *Harold* (1877); the two-act tragedy *he Cusp* (1881); the drama *The Promise of May* (1882); *Becket and Tiresias and Other Poems* (1885); *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* (1886); *Demeter and Other Poems* (1889); *The Foresters*, romantic play (1892). He was during the year of his death engaged upon poetic work which as published posthumously, *The Death of Enone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems*.

ROBERT BROWNING

"I HAD no idea that there was a perfectly sensible poet in the world, entirely free from vanity, aulosity, or any other littleness, and thinking no more of himself than if he were an ordinary an," wrote Benjamin Jowett, after meeting Browning, and Jowett's testimony to the sanity and the sociability of Browning is borne out by many other of his contemporaries. Browning as said to be the most captivating conversationalist in Europe; "But," said Mr. Freeman, if a man can talk to be understood, why can't he write to be understood?" Freeman goes on to y that he found Browning much like other men, whereas he "had thought that his *Comitatus*, ie Browning Society, would follow him everywhere to explain what he said." Few poets present such a puzzling personality as Browning. Simple, genial, social, virile, and happy, as a man, ven in his lifetime he had the doubtful compliment of a society formed for the sole purpose of studying and interpreting his poetry. As Dr. Johnson would, according to Goldsmith, have made little fishes talk like whales, so Browning, when he took pen in hand, seemed to lose the power of simple, direct expression. Yet, through the undoubted difficulties of his verse, the greatness of the poet has won a wider and wider circle of readers with the passing of the years.

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, a suburb of London, May 7, 1812. His father, Robert Browning, was for fifty years a clerk in the consols dividend room of the Bank of England. By frugality he accumulated a moderate fortune with which he indulged a rare taste in literature and art, having a library of more than six thousand volumes and a modest collection of prints. The poet's mother, Sarah Anne Wiedemann, was the daughter of William Wiedemann, a shipowner of a German family which had originally come from Hamburg and settled in Dundee, Scotland. Carlyle once spoke of her as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman," and Browning himself wrote, "She was a divine woman."

As a youth Browning was left unusual freedom to follow his own inclinations. After receiving the rudiments of an education in a Peckham school near by until he was fourteen years old, he had no further regular school training. For a few years he had a tutor in French, and at the age of eighteen he attended some lectures in Greek at London University, but his acquisitive mind found plenty of occupation in his father's well-chosen library and plenty of occupation in cribbling verses to be carefully scrutinized and criticized by his father. He was a restless, nervous, vigorous, somewhat self-willed youth, but not at all inclined to disabuse the liberty allowed him at home. "It would have been quite unpardonable in my case," he wrote in after years, "not to have done my best. My dear father put me in a condition most favourable for the best work I was capable of. When I think of the many authors who have had to fight their way through all sorts of difficulties, I have no reason to be proud of my achievement. My father secured for me all the ease and comfort which a literary man needs to do good work."

The only signs of precocity shown by Browning in his youth were his love for reading and his love for poetry, especially for writing poetry. In his reading he was especially fond of Quarles's *Emblems*, Walpole's *Letters*, the *Letters of Junius*, the works of the great Elizabethans, and Voltaire. Of modern poets, Byron, Shelley, and Keats were his favorites at first. At the age of twelve he gathered a number of his short poems into a volume called the *Inconclûta*, but was unable to find a publisher. His own first published poem was *Pauline*, issued anonymously in 1838 when he was twenty-one years old. This poem showed markedly the influence of Shelley.

In later years Browning regretted the publication of *Pauline*, tried to destroy all copies of it, and only consented to its republication in his collected poems when he realized that otherwise pirated editions would appear.

He had before this time definitely centered his ambitions upon a poetical career, declining to consider a business or professional training. Again we must pay tribute to the wisdom of his father who not only did not thwart his ambitions but encouraged them. The father's aid made travel and experience possible for the poet at a time when these were most essential for his mental and spiritual development. In the winter of 1833 he visited in St. Petersburg, and in the spring of 1834 he made his first trip to Italy, staying at Venice and Asolo. He was writing at the time during these months. Certain of his dramatic lyrics — notably *Johannes Agricola* and *Porphyria's Lover* — appeared during 1834 in a magazine, and his first great dramatic poem, *Paracelsus*, in book form over his own name in 1835. Upon its appearance John Forster, in an article entitled "Evidences of a New Genius for Dramatic Poetry," heralded Browning as worthy to rank with Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth: "He has entitled himself to a place among the acknowledged poets of the age," but *Paracelsus* did not gain a wide popularity. We find in the poem the subtle analysis of character and motive and the passages of lyric beauty and power which distinguish the best of his later work, but his subject was too far removed from the familiar knowledge of his own time and the style was not calculated to attract the general reader. Its moderate success enlarged his acquaintance among a select circle of literary men, however, so that he met such men as Horne, Hunt, Carlyle, Forster, Macready, Talford, Dickens, Wordsworth, and Landor. And it is interesting to read in Harriet Martineau's Autobiography: "Mr. Macready put *Paracelsus* into my hand, when I was staying at his house; and I read a canto before going to bed. For the first time in my life, I passed a whole night without sleeping a wink."

For one of these new friends, the famous actor and manager Macready, Browning undertook his next literary work, the play *Strafford*. This was produced in 1837 with fair success. Browning was encouraged to try his hand at the drama again, producing *King Victor and King Charles* (1842), *The Return of the Druses* and *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), *Luria* and *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846). His writing of dramas ceased, however, after an unfortunate quarrel with Macready over the performance of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* in 1843, and after the merely moderate success of his plays. Truth to say, the stage was not the proper medium for Browning's genius. Although the plays have occasional clear and forcible situations and abound in passages of high poetic merit, the long and intricate analyses of morals and motives are too apt to weary the average audience.

After the publication of *Paracelsus* in 1835 and the favorable comment excited by his play *Strafford*, two years later, Browning was well on the way to literary eminence, but his friends and admirers were confounded by the publication in 1840 of his *Sordello*. The tales of its effect upon its contemporaries illustrate humorously the difficulties which remain until the present day. Tennyson remarked that he understood only the first and last lines, — "Who will hear Sordello's story told," and "Who would, has heard Sordello's story told," — and they were both lies. Harriet Martineau wrote: "The unbounded expectation I formed from that poem [*Paracelsus*] was sadly disappointed when *Sordello* came out. I was so wholly unable to understand it that I supposed myself ill." Douglas Jerrold, convalescing from an illness, tried to read it; a few lines alarmed him; "sentence after sentence brought no constructive thought to his brain. . . . The perspiration rolled from his forehead, and smiting his head, he sat down on his sofa, crying, 'O God, I am an idiot!'" The obscurity of *Sordello* is due largely to the ruthless excision of connectives and the consequent jamming together of the main words of the thought. The reader's attention is too severely tasked to fill the gaps which occur in the grammatical constructions page after page. The undoubted beauties of many passages are lost by the great difficulty of following consecutively the story of the poem. Browning in his poetry, we can say thankfully, never again approached the obscurity in *Sordello*.

His next poetical works appeared in a series of cheap pamphlets between 1841 and 1846

Moxon, the publisher, informed Browning that he was bringing out editions of the Elizabethan dramatists in a cheap form and that the same cheap type could be used for some of the poet's work if so desired. Browning gladly seized the opportunity, and during these five years eight sixpenny brochures in yellow paper covers appeared under the title *Bells and Pomegranates*, indicating (he said) "alternation of poetry and thought." In addition to his dramas before mentioned, some of his most striking shorter poems appeared in the series, including *Pippa Passes*, a number of lyrics now grouped under *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances* in editions of Browning (as *Cavalier Tunes*, *Incident of the French Camp*, *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*, *The Laboratory*, *Cristina*, *The Flight of the Duchess*, *The Statue and the Bust*, etc.). These poems represent the height of the peculiar type of poetry in which Browning stands unrivaled. Once read, they fix themselves in the mind as the most forcible expression of their respective moods. They are essentially dramatic in situation and are expressed with a strength and originality that should have drawn the eyes of all contemporaries to them. Perhaps the reason they did not succeed notably lay in the influence of *Sordello*, which still lay as a weight over Browning's early admirers.

A more important result of the publication of *Bells and Pomegranates* than its failure to win popular applause was the introduction it brought to Elizabeth Barrett. This great romantic riser in Browning's life he met with the courage that he breathed through all his poems. Miss Barrett was an invalid, tenderly devoted to a narrow-minded father, who through the successive years of her illness had gradually come to resent even the idea of her return to health. The robust Browning, after a correspondence, met and loved Miss Barrett. The impossibility of gaining her father's consent to marriage was evident, and even Miss Barrett herself could not at first dream of such a consummation: "There is nothing to see in me, nothing to hear in me," he wrote to Browning; "I am a weed fit for the ground and darkness." The crisis came when, in the fall of 1846, Mr. Barrett refused to allow his daughter to go to Italy, the only course which, according to the physician, promised any improvement for her health. In the face of this attitude, much against his will Browning planned an elopement and a clandestine marriage, to which he gained Miss Barrett's consent. They were married secretly September 12, and a week later she stole away from the Barrett home, joined Browning, and went to Italy for the winter. Mr. Barrett never forgave his daughter, but in Italy she recovered a measure of health she had not thought possible. The married life of the couple was one of almost ideal happiness.

Browning's life henceforward is not marked by any outward incident of importance. For fifteen years he and his wife lived most of the time in Italy, making their home in the Casa Guidi in Florence, and living the quiet, secluded life necessary for the maintenance of Mrs. Browning's fragile health. June 29, 1861, she died there, and Browning was completely crushed by her loss. He never again returned to the city of Florence.

His poetical production during these years in Italy was comparatively small — *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* in 1850, and *Men and Women*, containing much of his best work, in 1855. After is wife's death he settled in London and resumed his writing, publishing *Dramatis Personæ* in 1864 and *The Ring and the Book* in the winter of 1868-69. *The Ring and the Book* is regarded as his masterpiece. In audacity of idea and skill of execution it marks the height of Browning's originality. Mrs. Orr narrates the source of the poem: "Mr. Browning was strolling one day through a square in Florence, the Piazza San Lorenzo, which is a standing market for old clothes, old furniture, and old curiosities of every kind, when a parchment-covered book attracted his eye, from amidst the artistic or nondescript rubbish of one of the stalls. It was a record of a murder which had taken place in Rome. . . . The book proved, on examination, to contain the whole history of the case, as carried on in writing, after the fashion of those days; leadings and counter-pleadings, the depositions of defendants and witnesses; manuscript letters announcing the execution of the murderer; and the 'instrument of the Definitive Sentence' which established the perfect innocence of the murdered wife: those various documents having been collected and bound together by some person interested in the trial. . . . Mr. Browning bought the whole for the value of eightpence, and it became the raw material of what

appeared four years later as *The Ring and the Book*." All the skill of the mental and moral analyst is exerted to dissect the motives, arguments, and gossip in the case, and the power and imagination of the poet are combined to give a vivid picture of the persons and the environment.

His increasing fame was recognized by the honors that fell to him thick and fast. In 1867, Oxford gave him its M.A. degree and Balliol elected him a fellow; in 1868 and 1884, he refused the proffered rectorship of St. Andrews; in 1879, Cambridge conferred upon him the LL.D.; in 1881, the Browning Society was founded by Dr. Furnivall; in 1882, Oxford honored him with the D.C.L. degree, and in 1884, Edinburgh with the LL.D.; and in 1886 he was appointed foreign correspondent for the Royal Academy. His circle of friends widened to include all the noted men of his time and he exerted himself to be socially agreeable.

Browning continued to write almost to the very end of his life, his work always original and forceful, although his later poems show only in patches the marvelous imaginative grasp and insight of his earlier. In the seventies he published a group of poems adapted from Greek originals, *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871), *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875), and *The Agamemnon of Æschylus* (1877). In 1879 he published the first series of the *Dramatic Idylls*, and a year later the second series; in 1884 he issued *Ferishtah's Fancies*; in 1887, *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance*.

Browning died at his son's house in Venice, December 12, 1889, from heart failure following a bronchial attack. He was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, December 31. A verse from the *Epilogue to Asolando* expresses better than can another's words the courage with which he had faced the stress of life.

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

This *Epilogue* was the last poem he ever wrote and he is reported to have said, as he perused the lines: "It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's truth, it shall stand."

GLOSSARY

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES



GLOSSARY

ibeach, adv., aloof, off.
iboon, prep., above.
ibrayde, pt. s., started (from sleep).
ibread, adv., abroad.
ibye, v., to pay for.
iccounted, pp., accounted.
ichat, n., purchase.
idoun, adv., downwards.
ie, adj., one.
iffyle, v., to file, i.e., to render smooth.
ifray, n., alarm, terror, fright.
igast, pp., scared, frightened.
igayn, adv., again.
igley, adv., askew.
igraste, v., to favor.
agree . . . to, v., accord with.
isblins, adv., maybe, perhaps.
isn, adj., own.
isrts, n., the directions.
is, adj., all.
is be, conj., although.
isday, adv., always.
isderbest, adv., best of all.
isale-stake, n., ale-stake, a horizontal pole projecting from an alehouse to support a sign or brush.
isgate, adv., always.
islye, v., to ally.
islyed, pp., allied.
is, also.
is . . . as, so . . . as.
is . . . and, both . . . and.
isamate, v., to dishearten, dismay, subdue.
isambiere, n., an ambling nag.
isamis, adv., wrongly.
isamis, n., a hood, or cape with a hood.
isance, adv., once.
isankas, n., a short two-edged knife, broad at the hilt and tapering to the point, formerly worn at the girdle.
isantiphoner, n., anthem-book.
ispyked, pp., trimmed, adorned.
isreedes, v., to declare, tell, counsel.
isreste, n., arrest.
isarras, n., tapestry, rich figured fabric.
isarrage, n. pl., arrears.
isare, n., ass.
isartow, for art thou.
isarwes, n. pl., arrows.

isaryve, v., to arrive.
isascendent, n., ascendant.
isaspye, n., spy.
isassaid, pp., assailed.
isassente, v., to assent.
isassoille, v., pardon, absolve.
isassoilling, n., absolution.
isasterte, v., to escape.
isastored, pp., stored, provided.
isattamed, pp., broached.
isatte best, in the best way.
isAtte Bowe, At Bow.
isauctours, n. pl., authors.
isAugustyn, St. Augustine.
isauld, adj., old.
isava, at all, of all.
isavaille, v., to avail.
isavale, v., to descend, subside, drop.
isavantour, n., boaster.
isavisoun, n., vision.
isawayt, in wait.
isaxeth, seekest (v. 2d pers. sing.).
isAy, adv., aye, ever.
isbace, adj., low.
isbaite, v., to bate.
isband, i.e., tie.
isbanes, n., bones.
isbar, pp., bare, carried.
isbare, carried (v. preterit).
isbarkit, pp., barked.
isbarley-bree, n., ale, whisky.
isbarres, n. pl., stripes across a girdle.
isbatalled, pp., crenelated.
isbauldricke, n., a belt, sometimes richly ornamented, worn over one shoulder, across the breast, and under the opposite arm, to support the sword, the bugle, etc.
isbawdrik, n., baldric. See **bauldricke**.
isbawk, n., a field path.
isbawnt, pp., white-streaked.
isbeggestere, n., beggar, properly a female beggar.
isbeight, v., to vow, promise; to deliver, grant, adjudge.
isben, n., parlour.
isbene, n., bean.
isbere, n., bier.
isberne, n., barn.
isberyls, n. pl., berries.
isbet, v., to go quickly.
isbet, adv., better.

isbeth war, beware.
isbett, pp., beat, beaten.
isbeuks, n., books.
isbever, n., drink, drinking, a light repast between meals.
isbeye, v., to buy.
isbicched bones, dice (n. plural).
isbield, n., a shelter, a sheltered spot.
isbifel, befell (v. preterit).
isbifore, adv., before.
isbiforn, prep., before.
isbig, v., to build.
isbigonne, begun (v. preterit).
isbiknewe, pp., confessed.
isbile, n., beak.
isbill, n., a bull.
isbillies, n. pl., fellows, comrades, brothers.
isbinethe, prep., beneath, within.
isbinne, n., bin, hutch, chest.
isbirkie, n., a fellow (usually implies conceit).
isbirks, n., birches.
isbisette, employed (v. preterit).
isbismotered, pp., besmattered, dirtied.
isbisylde, prep., from the neighborhood of.
isbit, adj., small.
isbiwreyest, revealest (v. present 2d. pers. sing.).
isblake, adj., black.
isBlankmanger, n., Blanc Mange.
isblastie, n., a damned creature.
isblate, adj., modest.
isbleer't, pp., bleared.
isbleezin, adj., blazing.
isbiellum, n., a babbler.
isblent, pp., blinded.
isblink, n., a moment, a short period.
isBoece, Boethius.
isboles, n. pl., bulls.
isbollet, n., bullet.
isboon, n., bone.
isboortrees, the shrub elder — planted much of old in hedges in barnyards.
isbord, n., table.
isbost, n., boast.
isbote, n., salvation.
isbotes, n. pl., boots.
isboughtes, n. pl., coils.
isbour, n., inner room.
isbourde, jest (v. present 1 pers. sing.).

bracer, *n.*, bracer, a guard for the arm in archery.
 Bradwardyn, *n.*, Bishop.
 braes, *n. pl.*, small hills.
 brast, burst out (*v. preterit*).
 brattle, *n.*, a spurt, a scamper.
 braw, *adj.*, gaily dressed, fine, handsome.
 breares, *n. pl.*, briars.
 breech, *n. pl.*, breeches.
 breem, *n.*, breem, a fish.
 brenninge, burning (*v. present partic.*).
 brent, *pp.* burnt.
 brent, *adj.*, straight.
 bretnful, *adj.*, brimful.
 briddes, *n. pl.*, birds.
 brinstane, *n.*, brimstone.
 brock, *n.*, a badger.
 brode, *adj.*, broad.
 brouke, *v.*, to enjoy, use.
 burdily, *adj.*, stout, stalwart.
 bulles, *n. pl.*, papal bulls.
 bulte, *v.*, to sift.
 bum-clock, *n.*, a humming beetle.
 burdies, *n. pl.*, maidens.
 burdoun, *n.*, burden of a song, bass accompaniment.
 Burgeys, *n.*, Burgess, citizen.
 burn, *n.*, rivulet.
 but-if, *conj.*, unless.
 butt, *n.*, kitchen.
 butty, *adj.*, rooty.
 by-cause, because.
 byke, *n.*, bees nest, hive.
 byre, *n.*, cowhouse.
 byte, *v.*, to bite, burn.
 cas, *n. pl.*, cases of law.
 ca'd, *pp.*, called.
 caller, *adj.*, cool, refreshing.
 cam, *pr. s.* of come; came.
 cannille, *adv.*, quietly, prudently, cautiously.
 Canon, *n.*, the "Canon," title of a book by Avicenna.
 canstow, for canst thou.
 cantie, *adj.*, cheerful, lively, jolly.
 cantraip, *adj.*, magic, witching.
 canty, see cantie.
 cappe, *n.*, cap.
 carf, *v.*, to cut, carve.
 carke, *n.*, load, charge, burden.
 carl or carle, *n.*, a rustic, countryman.
 carpe, *v.*, to talk, discourse.
 cas, *n.*, case, affair, circumstance, condition.
 castel-wal, *n.*, castle wall.
 catapuce, *n.*, caper, spurge.
 catel, *n.*, property, wealth, possession.
 centaure, *n.*, centaur.
 centonell, *n.*, sentinel.

ceruce, *n.*, white lead.
 change-house, *n.*, tavern.
 chaunterie, *n.*, an endowment for a priest to sing mass.
 chear, *n.*, chair, cheer.
 chere, *n.*, behavior; also entertainment.
 cherles, *n. pl.*, churls.
 chevisaunce, *n.*, dealing for profit.
 chide, *v.*, to blame.
 chiele, *n. pl.*, fellows, a young fellow, indicates approval.
 chivachye, *n.*, a military expedition.
 cink, five.
 claes, *n. pl.*, clothes.
 cleped, *pp.*, called.
 clepen, *v.*, to call, name.
 clergeon, *n.*, chorister boy.
 clerkis, *n. pl.*, writers, scholars.
 klokke, *n.*, clock.
 clout, *n.*, bit of cloth.
 cloutes, *n. pl.*, rags.
 clyme, *v.*, to climb.
 coche, *n.*, coach.
 coft, *pp.*, bought.
 coillons, *n. pl.*, testicles.
 cokes, *n. pl.*, cooks.
 cokewold, *v.*, to deceive, play false.
 col-fox, *n.*, coal-fox, black fox.
 colpons, *n. pl.*, shreds, bundles.
 complecciouns, *n. pl.*, complexions.
 conne, *v.*, to con, learn.
 conning, *n.*, experience.
 consent, *n.*, harmony.
 kontek, *n.*, strife, contest.
 contrarie, *n.*, opposite, foe, opponent.
 cood, *n.*, cud.
 coost, *v.*, to throw off.
 cootie, *n.*, a wooden dish.
 cop, *n.*, top.
 cope, *n.*, cope.
 coppe, *n.*, cup.
 corages, *n.*, heart, spirit, nature.
 coronall, a circlet for the head, a crown; also, a garland.
 corse, *n.*, corpse.
 coste, *n.*, coast.
 cote, *n.*, skirt, petticoat or gown (for a woman).
 counterfesaunce, *n.*, counterfeiting, imposture.
 countour, *n.*, auditor.
 countrefete, *v.*, to counterfeit, imitate.
 cours, *n.*, course, path, orbit.
 courtopy, *n.*, an upper short coat of coarse material.
 couthe, *pp.*, *pl.* well-known.
 covent, *n.*, convent, conventional body.

coverchiefs, *n. pl.*, kerchie worn on the head.
 covyne, *n.*, deceitfulness.
 crack, *n.*, tales, talk.
 cranreuch, *n.*, hoar-frost, rime.
 creast, *n.*, crest.
 creashie, *adj.*, greasy.
 croked, *adj.*, crooked.
 croose, *adj.*, cocksure.
 cropt, *pp.*, bitten, pulled or snipped off.
 croud, *n.*, crowd, an ancient Celtic instrument with a rectangular body and six strings; fiddle.
 crouse, *adv.*, cheerfully, lively, jolly.
 crowdie-time, *n.*, porridge-time.
 cruile, *adj.*, curly.
 crummockcudgel, *n.*, crooked staff.
 crump, *adj.*, crisp.
 cuif, *n.*, a dull fellow, a dolt.
 curchie, *n.*, curtesy.
 cure, *n.*, attention.
 cushat, *n.*, wood pigeon.
 cut, *n.*, lot.
 cutty-sark, *n.*, short skirt.
 daffin, *n.*, larking fun.
 dails, *n.*, deals, planks.
 daimen-icker, *n.*, an occasional ear of corn.
 dalaunce, *n.*, gossip.
 Dan, Sir, Lord, title of respect.
 darg, *n.*, labor, task, a day's labor.
 darrayne, *v.*, to order, manage; to wage (battle); to prove by wager or battle.
 Daun, *n.*, (for Dominus), Lord, Sir, title of respect.
 daunce (the olde), the old game of love.
 dawds, *n. pl.*, lumps and large portions.
 dawning, *n.*, dawning.
 dawtit, *pp.*, fondled, petted.
 deas, *n. pl.*, dice.
 defesaunce, *n.*, defeat.
 defended, *v.*, forbidden.
 defouled, *pp.*, defiled.
 Deil-haet, nothing (tho the devil have it).
 Deils, Devils.
 del (a greet), *n.*, a great deal largely, to a large extent.
 delen ger, to have dealing with.
 deliverly, *adv.*, nimbly.
 demen, *v.*, to ask.
 depe, *adj.*, deep.
 depeint, *pp.*, stained.
 dere, *adj.*, deer.
 descant, *n.*, the melody or

counterpoint sung to the cantus or plain song. lesolaat, <i>adj.</i>, shunned. lespitous, <i>adj.</i>, merciless. lesport, <i>n.</i>, sport, diversion, merriment, amusement. lespyt, in contempt of you. letteless, <i>adj.</i>, free from debt. leye, <i>n.</i>, dairy woman. leyntee, <i>adj.</i>, good. leys, <i>n.</i>, dais, platform, the high table in the dining-room. Hapred, <i>adj.</i>, variegated. ligestyves, <i>n. pl.</i>, digestives. light, <i>v.</i>, to dress, array. ligne, <i>adj.</i>, worthy. ling, <i>v.</i>, to beat, surpass. linna, do not. lirl, <i>v.</i>, to vibrate, ring. lischevele, <i>adj.</i>, with his hair hanging loosely down. lispence, <i>n.</i>, expenditure, expense. dispiteous, <i>adj.</i>, malicious, pitiless. lites, raises. dizzens, dozen. doghtren, <i>n. pl.</i>, daughters. dokes, <i>n. pl.</i>, ducks. domes, <i>n. pl.</i>, decisions, judgments. dong, <i>n.</i>, dung, manure. donnie, <i>adj.</i>, unlucky. doon, <i>v.</i>, to do. dormant, <i>n.</i>, table dormant, a permanent side table. dorste, durst. doun, <i>adv.</i>, down. doure, <i>adj.</i>, stubborn, obstinate. dow, are able. drave, drove. drecched, <i>pp.</i>, vexed, troubled. drede (it is no drede), without doubt. dreriment, <i>n.</i>, gloom. dreynt, <i>pp.</i>, drowned. droddum, <i>n.</i>, the breech. droghte, <i>n.</i>, drought. drough, <i>pp.</i>, drew. drouthy, <i>adj.</i>, thirsty. drumlie, <i>adj.</i>, turbid. duddie, <i>adj.</i>, ragged. dyde, <i>pp.</i>, died. earst, <i>adv.</i>, formerly, a while before or ago. echon, each one. EEK, <i>adv.</i>, also, moreover. een, <i>n. pl.</i>, eyes. eerie, <i>adj.</i>, weird, inspiring ghostly fear. est, <i>pp.</i>, ate. eftsoones, <i>adv.</i>, soon after, presently, forthwith.	eir, <i>n.</i>, air. eke, <i>adv.</i>, also, moreover. eldritch, <i>adj.</i>, horrible, unearthly. Ellebor, <i>n.</i>, Hellebore, a kind of poison. elles, <i>adv.</i>, else, otherwise. embard, <i>pp.</i>, confined, imprisoned. embayd, <i>pp.</i>, enclosed. embosse, <i>v.</i>, to encase, ensheath. emboyled, <i>pp.</i>, boiled. emperst, <i>pp.</i>, pierced, transfixed. endyte, <i>v.</i>, to write, dictate. engnyed, <i>pp.</i>, tortured, racked. enhaust, <i>pp.</i>, raised, exalted. enranged, <i>pp.</i>, disposed, drawn up. entraille, <i>n.</i>, entrails. entrayled, <i>pp.</i>, entwined, interlaced. er, <i>conj.</i>, before. Erchedeknes, <i>n.</i>, Archdeacon's. esed, <i>pp.</i>, entertained. esloyne, <i>v.</i>, to keep aloof from. espye, <i>v.</i>, to espy, observe. essoyn, <i>n.</i>, excuse. estat, <i>n.</i>, estate, state, condition. estadlich, <i>adv.</i>, stately, dignified. ete, <i>v.</i>, to eat. ettle, <i>n.</i>, aim. everich, every. everichon, every one. every-deel, <i>adv.</i>, every whit. ewghen, <i>adj.</i>, yewen, of yew. excheat, <i>n.</i>, escheat. expect, <i>v.</i>, to await. ey, <i>n.</i>, egg. eyes (of hawks), <i>adj.</i>, newly fledged. eydent, <i>adj.</i>, diligent. eyen, <i>n. pl.</i>, eyes. eyled, <i>pp.</i>, ailed. eyleth, aileth (<i>v. present</i>). fa', <i>n.</i>, a fall, lot, portion. fadres, <i>n. pl.</i>, ancestors. faillie, <i>v.</i>, to fail. fair, <i>n.</i>, a good one. falding, <i>n.</i>, a sort of coarse cloth. fand, <i>pp.</i>, found. fare, <i>pp.</i>, gone. faris, <i>n. pl.</i>, small thin oat cakes. farsed, <i>pp.</i>, stuffed. faste, <i>v.</i>, to fast. fause, <i>adj.</i>, false. fawsont, <i>adj.</i>, seemly, decent, honest. faytor, <i>n.</i>, an impostor.	feateously, <i>adv.</i>, deftly. fecche, <i>v.</i>, to fetch. fecht, <i>n.</i>, fight. feck, <i>n.</i>, the bulk, the most part. felicitie, <i>n.</i>, happiness. fell, <i>adj.</i>, keen, cruel, dreadful pungent. felly, <i>adv.</i>, fiercely, cruelly, barbarously. fen, <i>n.</i>, chapter or subdivision of Avicenna's book called the Canon. fer, <i>adj.</i>, far. ferre, <i>n.</i>, a companion, mate. ferlie, <i>n.</i>, a wonder (used contemptuously). ferme, <i>n.</i>, farm. ferne, <i>pl.</i> of ferren, distant, remote. ferre or ferrer, <i>adv.</i>, farther. ferreste, farthest. fest, <i>n.</i>, fist. festne, <i>v.</i>, to fasten. fet, <i>pp.</i>, brought. fethered, <i>pp.</i>, feathered. fetishly, <i>adv.</i>, elegantly. fiest-a, nothing of a. fiest haet o', not one of them. fiere, <i>n.</i>, comrade. fil, fell (<i>preterit</i> of fall). filch, <i>v.</i>, to steal, pilfer. finch, <i>n.</i>, finch (bird), "pulle a finch," pluck a dupe. fithle, <i>n.</i>, fiddle. flainen or flannen, <i>adj.</i>, flannel. flasket, <i>n.</i>, a long shallow basket. fleeched, <i>pp.</i>, wheedled. fleigh, flew (<i>v. preterit</i>). fley, <i>pp.</i>, flew. flichterin, fluttering, as young nestlings when their day approaches. flour, <i>n.</i>, flower. floytinge, playing on the flute (<i>v. present partic.</i>). folwing, following (<i>v. present partic.</i>). fome, <i>n.</i>, foam. fons, <i>n. pl.</i>, foes. foot-mantel, <i>n.</i>, foot cloth, a safeguard to cover the skirt. for, instead of. forlete, <i>v.</i>, to abandon, forsake. forn-cast, <i>pp.</i>, premeditated. forneys, <i>n.</i>, furnace. for-pyned, <i>pp.</i>, wasted away. fors, <i>n.</i>, force. for-sleuthen, <i>v.</i>, to waste in sloth. forster, <i>n.</i>, forester. fortunen, <i>v.</i>, to give fortune (good or bad). for-why, <i>conj.</i>, wherefor, why,
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forwiting, *n.*, foreknowledge.
 forwoot, foreknows, forsees
 (*v. present*).
 fother, *n.*, a load; properly, a
 cartload.
 fou', *adj.*, full.
 foule, *adj.*, wretched.
 fourre, four.
 fowles, *n. pl.*, birds.
 Frankeleyns, *n. pl.*, Franklins.
 frayneth, prays, beseeches (*v. present*).
 fruytsteres, *n. pl.*, fruit sellers.
 fumetere, *n.*, fumitory.
 fundement, *n.*, fundament,
 buttocks.
 furma, *n. pl.*, wooden forma.
 fustian, *n.*, fustian.
 fyke, *v.*, to fuss, fidget.
 fyl'd, *pp.*, defiled, fouled.
 fyneste, *adj.* (*superl.*), finest.
 fyrie, *adj.*, fiery.
 fyr-reed, *adj.*, red as fire,
 flaming.
 gabbe, lie, speak idly (*v. present*).
 gadrede, *pp.*, gathered.
 gaed, went (*v. preterit*).
 galingale, *n.*, sweet cyperus. A
 spice was prepared from the
 root of the plant.
 game, *n.*, amusement, fun,
 merriment.
 gamed, it pleased.
 gan, began (*v. preterit*).
 gang, *v.*, to walk, go.
 gargat, *n.*, throat.
 gars, causes, makes, compels
 (*v. present*).
 gart, *pp.*, made.
 gash, *adj.*, wise.
 gat-toothed, *adj.*, having the
 teeth far apart.
 gaude, *n.*, trick, course of
 trickery.
 Gaufred, Geoffrey de Vinsauf,
 Anglo-Norman Trouvère.
 gaun, going (*v. pr. part.*).
 gawais, *adj.*, big and joyous.
 gaytres beryes, berries of the
 goat tree.
 gear, *n.*, money, wealth.
 gees, *n. pl.*, geese.
 gentil, *adj.*, mild in manner.
 geordie, *n.*, guinea.
 gere, *n.*, utensils.
 gerner, *n.*, garner.
 gies, *v. pr. s.*, gives.
 gills, *n. pl.*, glasses of whiskey.
 gin, *conj.*, if.
 gin, *prep.*, against, by.
 gipoun, *n.*, a short cassock or
 doublet.
 gipsier, *n.*, pouch, purse.
 girland, *n.*, a garland.

giusts, *n. pl.*, jousts, tilts.
 gizz, *n.*, wig.
 glaikit, *adj.*, foolish, thought-
 less, giddy.
 glowr, *v.*, to stare.
 glyster, *n.*, an injection, an
 enema.
 gnarre, *v.*, to snarl.
 gobet, *n.*, piece, morsel.
 golet, *n.*, throat, gullet.
 goliardeys, *n.*, buffoon, a
 scurrilous talker.
 goost, goest (*v. present*).
 goot, *n.*, goat.
 gorcock, *n.*, the moorcock.
 governance, *n.*, management,
 control.
 gowd, *n.*, gold.
 graith, *n.*, garb, attire.
 granes, *n. pl.*, groans.
 grat, *pp.*, wept.
 gree, *n.*, the prize.
 greyn, *n.*, grain, corn.
 griesly, *adj.*, grisly, horrible,
 grim.
 griple, *adj.*, gripping, grasping.
 grope, *v.*, to try, test, examine.
 grosse, *v.*, to increase.
 grote, *n.*, groat, (Dutch) coin.
 grozet, *n.*, gooseberry.
 gruf, *adv.*, on their faces,
 groveling.
 grushie, *adj.*, growing.
 grys, *n.*, a gray fur.
 guerdon, *n.*, reward, recom-
 pense.
 guidmen, *n.*, husband.
 guid-willie, *adj.*, hearty, full of
 good will.
 gyse, *n.*, guise, way.
 habergeoun, *n.*, a hauberk or
 coat of mail.
 habundant, *adj.*, abundant.
 haffets, *n. pl.*, the temples, the
 side of the head.
 hafflins-wise, *adv.*, half, partly.
 haith, *n.*, faith.
 hald, *n.*, holding, abiding
 place.
 hallan, *n.*, a partition between
 the door of a cottage and a
 fireplace.
 halse, *v.*, to conjure, beseech.
 halwes, *n. pl.*, shrines of
 saints.
 hame, *n.*, home.
 hap, *n.*, that which happens
 suddenly or unexpectedly,
 chance, fortune.
 hap, *v.*, to cover up, clothe.
 happier, *n.*, hopper (of a mill).
 hap-step-an-lowp, hop-step-
 and-leap.
 harn, *n.*, coarse cloth.
 harre, *n.*, hinge.

harrow, *interjection*, help.
 hasardrye, *n.*, gambling.
 hasty accidents, the accidents
 of haste, i.e. the mis-
 day was probably done
 at short notice to a
 earlier than that set
 nally.
 haud, *v.*, to hold, keep.
 hauffet, *n.*, temple locus.
 haunt, *n.*, usual resort.
 hauteyn, *adj.*, loud.
 hawe, *n.*, yard, enclosure.
 hawkie's, *n.*, cow, esp. a
 faced cow.
 healsome, *adj.*, wholesome.
 heastes, *n. pl.*, hests, com-
 mands.
 heben, *adj.*, ebony, of ebony.
 heberwe, *n.*, inn.
 hech, exclamation.
 heed, *n.*, head.
 heep, *n.*, great number, crowd.
 heer, *n.*, hair.
 heer, *adv.*, here.
 hegges, *n. pl.*, hedges.
 hele, *n.*, cure, recovery.
 heled, *pp.*, healed.
 helpless, *adj.*, irremediable.
 hem, *pron.*, them.
 heng or henge, *v.*, to hang.
 henne, *adv.*, hence.
 hente, *pp.*, seized, caught
 of.
 hente, *v.*, to acquire, get.
 her, *adv.*, here.
 herde, *n.*, herd, keeper
 cattle.
 herien, herieth, praise
 present).
 hertless, *adj.*, heartless.
 hertely, *adv.*, heartily.
 heryinge, *n.*, praise.
 hestes, *n. pl.*, commands.
 het, *adj.*, hot.
 heughs, *n. pl.*, crags, rocks,
 banks.
 heve, *v.*, to heave, lift.
 hewe, *n.*, hew, color, com-
 plexion.
 hewed, *adj.*, colored, hewed.
 heyre, *adj.*, hair, made of hair.
 hider, *adv.*, hither.
 hight or highte, *pp.*, called,
 named, mentioned by name.
 him happede, it happened.
 hindreste, *adj.*, hindmost.
 hir, *pron.*, her, them, their.
 hirplin, *adj.*, limping, hobbling.
 histie, *adj.*, bare.
 hizzies, *n. pl.*, huzzies,
 wenches.
 hob, *n.*, fairy, sprite, elf.
 hoddin, *n.*, the motion
 countryman riding on a cart
 horse.

holpen, *pp.*, helped, aided.
holt, *n.*, wood, plantation.
hond, *n.*, hand.
hool, *adj.*, whole, healed.
hoom, *n.*, home.
hoomly, *adv.*, in a homely way.
hot, *adj.*, hot.
hord, *n.*, treasure.
hore, hair; her; hoar; ore; where.
hote, *pp.*, called.
hote, *v.*, to command, promise.
houghmagandie, *n.*, fornication.
houlet, *n.*, owl.
houped, *pp.*, whooped.
houres, *n. pl.*, hours.
howkin, digging (*v. pr. part.*).
howkit, *v.*, to dig out.
hurdies, *n. pl.*, loins, crupper, buttocks.
hye, *n.*, hedge.
hyer, *adj.*, higher.
hyne, *n.*, servant, peasant.
hyred, *pp.*, hired.

langleth, chatter, prate (*v. present*).
ieet, *n.*, jet.
Ilioun, Iliou, the citadel of Troy.
ilk or ilka, each, every.
ilke, *adj.*, same, very.
ingle, *n.*, the fire, fireplace.
inspired, *pp.*, quickened.
intendiment, *n.*, attention, consideration.
iolitee, *n.*, sport, amusement.
ire, *n.*, anger.
iron, *n.*, iron.
ither, *adj.*, other, each other, one another.

jads, *n. pl.*, jades.
japes, *n. pl.*, tricks.
jauk, *v.*, to trifle, dally.
Jewerye, Jews quarters.
jow, a verb denoting both the swing and peal of a large bell.

kail, *n.*, cabbage.
kain, *n.*, rents in kind.
kebbuck, *n.*, cheese.
keeks, *v.*, to look, peep.
keep, *v.*, to pay heed.
kend, *pp.*, known.
kend, *adj.*, kind.
kiaugh, *n.*, cark, anxiety.
kirk, *n.*, church.
kirn, *n.*, the churn; also a harvest home.
kirtle, *n.*, a man's tunic or coat.
knarre, *n.*, a knotted, thickset fellow.

knobbles, *n. pl.*, knobs, large pimples.
knowes, *n. pl.*, knees.
kye, *n.*, kine, cows.
kyn, *n. pl.*, kine, cows.
kynde, *n.*, nature, disposition.

laas, *n.*, thick string.
ladde, *pp.*, lead.
lafte, *pp.*, left.
lakkede, *pp.*, lacked.
lang syne, long since, long ago.
lasse, *adj.*, (comp.) less.
lat, *pp.*, let.
latoun, *n.*, latten, a compound metal, containing chiefly copper and zinc.
Lauriol, *n.*, spurge - laurel, Daphne Laureola.
lave, *n.*, the rest, remainder, the others.
lav'rocks, *n. pl.*, the larks.
lazar, *n.*, leper.
lear, *n.*, lore, learning.
leche, *n.*, physician.
leef, you so leef, so desired by you.

lee-lang, live long.
leeze-me-on, commend me to.
lemes, *n. pl.*, limbs.
lenger, *adj.*, longer.
leoun, *n.*, lion.
lere, *v.*, to learn.
lerned, *pp.*, learnt.
lese, *v.*, lose.
lesinges, *n. pl.*, losses.
lest, *n.*, delight.
leste, *pp.*, pleased.
lette, *v.*, to tarry.
letuaries, *n. pl.*, electuaries.
leuk, *v.*, look.
leve, *n.*, dear one.
lever, *adv.*, rather.
lewed, *adj.*, ignorant, unlearned.

leyd, *pp.*, laid.
leye, *v.*, to lay.
licour, *n.*, moisture.
lief, *adj.*, dear; darling.
lifull, *adj.*, lifeful, vitalizing.
liggen, *v.*, to lie.
lilled, *pp.*, lolled.
limitour, *n.*, limitor, a friar licensed to beg for alms within a certain limit.
limmer, *n.*, a mistress.
lin, *v.*, to cease, cease from.
linket, *v.*, to trip or dance with activity.
linn, *n.*, waterfall.
lint, *n.*, flax.
list, is, are, was, were pleased; me list, him list, ye list, etc.; it pleases me, him, you, etc.
lith, *n.*, limb (of herself).
Lo, *interjection*.

loan, *n.*, a lane, path, a private road to a farmhouse.
lodemenage, *n.*, pilotage, the hire of a pilot for conducting a ship.
loken, *pp.*, enlocked, locked up.
lokkes, *n. pl.*, locks of hair.
lond, *n.*, land.
long, *adj.*, distant.
longen, *v.*, to long, wish.
loof, *n.*, the palm of the hand.
Lordinges, Sirs, My Masters.
lorn, *pp.*, lost.
lorne, *pp.*, lost, deserted.
losengeour, *n.*, flatterer.
lough, laugh (*v. preterit*).
lough, *n.*, a loch, lake.
loun, *n.*, a clown, rascal.
louting, looting (*v. pr. part.*).
love-dayes, *n. pl.*, days for arbitrating disputes.
lovyere, *n.*, lover.
lowin', *adj.*, flaming.
lowpin, leaping (*v. pres. part.*).
lowsed, *pp.*, set loose.
luce, *n.*, luce, a pike.
lugs, *n. pl.*, ears.
luntin, *adj.*, smoking.
lusty-hed, *n.*, pleasure, enjoyment, gay living.
lyart, *adj.*, gray.
lyte, *adj.*, small, little.
lyth, lieth (*v. present*).

mace, *n.*, a heavy staff wholly or partly of metal and often spiked.
maist, *adv.*, most, almost.
maistow, *for*, mayest thou.
maistres, *n. pl.*, masters.
male, *n.*, bag, wallet.
maner, *n.*, manner, kind, sort.
maner, *n.*, manor, place to dwell in.
mantlees, *n. pl.*, mantles.
marres, mars (*v. present*).
mary-bones, *n. pl.*, marrow-bones.
mase, *n.*, bewildering position.
maugree, *prep.*, in spite of.
maun, must (*v. present*).
maunciple, *n.*, manciple, an officer who purchases victuals for an inn or college.
mavis, *n.*, a song thrush.
maystou, mayest thou.
mede, *n.*, mead, meadow.
medlee, *adj.*, of a mixed color.
mekle, *adj.*, much.
melder, *n.*, the quantity of corn sent to be ground.
melvie, *v.*, to dust with meal.
mene, *v.*, to mean, intend.
ment, *pp.*, mixed, mingled.
mervaille, *n.*, wonder.

messin, *n.*, a little dog, a cur.
 mete, *n.*, meat, food.
 mete, *v.*, to meet.
 mette, dreamt (*v. preterit*).
 mewe, *n.*, mew, a coop
 wherein fowls were fattened.
 meynes, *n.*, household, retinue.
 minisht, *pp.*, diminished.
 mirk, *adj.*, dark, gloomily
 dark.
 mochel, *adv.*, much.
 monie, *adj.*, many.
 moot, must, shall (*v. present*).
 mormal, *n.*, sore, gangrene.
 morne, *n.*, morning milk.
 mortreux, *n.*, thickened soups
 or pottages.
 morve (by the), early in the
 morning.
 mote, must (*v. present*).
 motlelee, *adj.*, motley.
 moudieworts, *n. pl.*, moles.
 mountance, *n.*, amount, value,
 quantity.
 muchell, *adj.*, great, much.
 Mulla, the Awbeg, a stream in
 the Ballahoura mountains.
 The Awbeg empties into the
 Blackwater, in Spenser's
 day commonly called Broad-
 water.

na or nse, not.
 namo, *adv.*, no more.
 name, none.
 nappy, *n.*, strong ale.
 narwe, *adj.*, small.
 nas, was not.
 nayles, *n. pl.*, nails, claws.
 ne, *adv.*, and *conj.*, not.
 nedely, *adv.*, of necessity,
 necessarily.
 needments, *n. pl.*, things
 needed, necessary luggage.
 neet, *n.*, neat, cattle.
 nekke-boon, *n.*, neck bone.
 ner, *adj.*, near.
 nere, were not.
 never-a-del, *adv.*, not a bit.
 niest, *adj.*, next.
 nive, *n.*, fist.
 niffer, *v.*, to exchange.
 nightertale, in the night time,
 night after night.
 nis, *for*, is not.
 nobles, *n. pl.*, gold coins.
 noight, *adv.*, not.
 nolde, would not (*v. preterit*).
 nones, for the, for the nonce,
 for the occasion.
 noot, know not (*v. present*).
 norissing, *adj.*, nourishing.
 nose-thirles, *n. pl.*, nostrils.
 not heed, *n.*, head with hair
 cropped short.
 nousled, *pp.*, fostered, reared.

nouth, just now, at present.
 nowt, *n.*, cattle.
 ny, *adv.*, nigh, near.
 nye, *v.*, to draw near.
 o, oo, or oon, one.
 offering, *n.*, offering. the set of
 going to the altar to present
 alms.
 ones, *adv.*, once.
 ook, *n.*, oak.
 ooth, *n.*, oath.
 orerest, *adj.*, outermost.
 orlogge, *n.*, clock in a steeple.
 oule, *n.*, owl.
 ounces, *n. pl.*, small portions.
 ourie, *adj.*, shivering, droop-
 ing.
 out-rydere, *n.*, rider abroad,
 the name of a monk who
 rode to inspect granges.
 ouzell, *n.*, blackbird.
 owches, *n. pl.*, brooches.
 owre, *prep.*, over.
 owsen, *n.*, oxen.

paas (goon a paas), *n.*, pace,
 step (go at a footpace).
 pace, *v.*, to pass.
 patient, *adj.*, patient.
 page, *n.*, page (a boy).
 paidl'd, paddled, waded (*v.*
pret.).
 painch, *n.*, paunch.
 paltrick, *n.*, partridge.
 parbreake, *v.*, to vomit.
 par cas, by chance.
 pardee, a common oath. Fr.
 pardieu.
 pardoner, *n.*, pardoner, seller
 of indulgences.
 parfouned, *pp.*, performed,
 completed.
 parfy, *adj.*, perfect.
 parritch, *n.*, porridge.
 parvys, *n.*, church-porch.
 pas, *n.*, footpace.
 peacock-arwes, *n. pl.*, arrows
 with peacock's feathers.
 pechan, *n.*, the stomach.
 pennes, *n. pl.*, quills.
 pens, *n.*, penny, pence.
 perced, *pp.*, pierced.
 pers, *n.*, stuff of a sky-blue
 color.
 perced, *pp.*, pierced.
 persaut, *adj.*, piercing.
 payne, *v.*, to take pains,
 endeavor.
 pight, *pp.*, pitched, placed,
 hurled, struck.
 piled, *pp.*, deprived of hair,
 very thin.
 pilwe-beer, *n.*, pillow-case.
 pinche, *v.*, to find fault with,
 pick a hole in.

Pirrus, *n.*, Pyrrhus.
 pit, *pp.*, put.
 plaste, *pp.*, placed.
 plat, *adv.*, flat.
 playnd, *pp.*, planned.
 plesen, *v.*, to please.
 pleye, *v.*, to play, be amused.
 pleyn, *adj.*, full.
 poind, *v.*, to seize, to impound.
 pokkes, *n. pl.*, pocks, pustules.
 poortiths, poverty's.
 poraille, *n.*, poor people.
 port, *n.*, carriage, behavior.
 portesse, *n.*, a breviary.
 poudre-marchant, *n.*, the
 name of a kind of a spice.
 Pouke, Robin Goodfellow
 Puck.
 pouped, *pp.*, blew hard, puffed.
 poure, pour, pour, power, pur.
 pouthery, *adj.*, powdery.
 pow, *n.*, the poll, the head.
 poynaunt, *adj.*, pungent.
 poysen, *n.*, poison.
 practisour, *n.*, practitioner.
 predicacioun, *n.*, preaching
 sermon.
 press, *n.*, the press, the crowd.
 presse, *n.*, mould.
 pricasour, *n.*, a hard rider.
 priefe, *n.*, trial, examination.
 demonstration, efficacy.
 prikeith, incites, excites (*v.*
present).
 priue, *adj.*, secret.
 prively, *adv.*, secretly.
 prow, *n.*, profit, advantage.
 pryne, *n.*, prime (of day)
 usually 9 A.M.
 prys, *n.*, price, value.
 plussant, *adj.*, powerful.
 pulled hen, a plucked hen.
 purtreys, *v.*, to draw.
 pynd, *pp.*, examined by tur-
 ture.

quad, *adj.*, bad.
 quelle, *v.*, to kill.
 quod, quoth (*v. preterit*).
 quyte you, repay you.
 rablement, *n.*, disturbance,
 tumult.
 raibles, *n. pl.*, gabbles.
 raikin, *adj.*, roaring.
 ram, *n.*, ram (as a prize at
 wrestling).
 ranckes, proud, forward.
 rash-buss, *n.*, a clump of
 rushes.
 raskall, *adj.*, of the rabble
 vulgar, base.
 raught, *pp.*, reached (out or
 forward).
 ravisedest, didst draw (down).
 ream, *n.*, foam.

recche, interpret, expound
(*v. present*).

recure, *v.*, to repair.

redoubled, *pp.*, re-echoed.

reed, *adj.*, red.

reekit, *adj.*, smoky.

reestit, *pp.*, singed.

reft, took away (*v. preterit*).

reherce, *v.*, to rehearse, repeat.

rekke, *n.*, care.

remeant, *n.*, remainder, rest.

remes, *n. pl.*, realms.

rennen, *v.*, to run.

rent, *v.*, to rend, hurl.

rente, *n.*, revenue, income.

repleccioun, *n.*, repletion.

repleet, *adj.*, replete, full.

repreve, *n.*, shame.

resoun, *n.*, reason, right.

rethor, *n.*, orator.

reule, *n.*, rule.

reve, *n.*, reeve, steward, bailiff.

revers, *n.*, reverse, contrary.

reweth, makes me sorry, I am
sorry (*v. present*).

reyn, *n.*, rain.

reysed, *pp.*, gone on a military
expedition.

rigwoodie, *adj.*, ancient, lean.

rin, *v.*, to run.

rives, splits, cleaves, rends,
tears (*v. present*).

robuckes, the male or any roe
deer.

roghte, recked, cared, re-
garded (*v. preterit*).

rood, rode (*v. preterit*).

roos, *pp.*, rose.

rote, *n.*, root.

rote, by heart.

rote, *n.*, a kind of fiddle, of Cel-
tic origin.

rouncy, *n.*, a hackney, a nag.

rowme, *n.*, room.

rowtin, *adj.*, hellowing.

royalliche, *adv.*, royally.

rozet, *n.*, rosin.

ruddock, *n.*, redbreast.

rudeliche, *adv.*, rudely.

runkl'd, *pp.*, wrinkled.

ruste, *v.*, to rust.

ryve, *v.*, to pierce.

sae, *adv.*, so.

saffron with, to tinge with
(colour) saffron.

sair, *adj.*, sore.

salue, *v.*, (*Ger.*) to greet.

sam, *adv.*, together.

sang, *n.*, song.

sangwin, *adj.*, blood-red.

sark, *n.*, shirt, shift.

sauh, saw (*v. preterit*).

sautrye, *n.*, psalter, a kind of
harp (8 strings).

sawcfeleem, *adj.*, covered with

pimples (due to an excess
of humour called salsa
phlegma).

say, *n.*, proof, quality.

sayle, *v.*, to sail.

scalled, *pp.*, scaly, scabby.

scathe, *n.*, scathe, harm, "a
pity."

scaul, *v.*, to scold.

scaur, *adj.*, scary, timid.

scole, *n.*, school.

scolaye, *v.*, (*Ger.*) to attend

school, to study.

scowre, *v.*, to scour.

screed, *n.*, a rip, rent.

secre, *adj.*, secret.

seely, *adj.*, simple, harmless,
helpless, poor.

seigh, saw (*v. preterit*).

seith, says (*v. present*).

seke, *v.*, to search, seek.

seke, *adj.*, sick, ill.

sely, *adj.*, good, happy.

seminge, as it appears to me.

seson, *n.*, season.

sethe, *v.*, to seethe, boil.

seuretee, *n.*, surety.

seyl, *n.*, sail.

seyn, *pp.*, seen.

shamfastnesse, *n.*, modesty.

shaply, *adv.*, shapely, fit.

shaumes, *n. pl.*, legs, limbs.

shaw, *n.*, wood.

sheef, *n.*, sheaf.

sheeldes, *n. pl.*, shields.

shend, *v.*, to disgrace.

shent, *pp.*, scolded.

sherte, *n.*, shirt.

sheugh, *n.*, a ditch, furrow.

shire, *n.*, shire.

shirreve, *n.*, sheriff.

shiten, *adj.*, dirty, defiled.

sho, *n.*, shoe.

shog, *n.*, a shake.

shoulder-boon, *n.*, shoulder
blade bone.

shoof, shoved, pushed (*v.*
preterit).

shoon, *n. pl.*, shoes.

shoures, *n. pl.*, showers.

shrewe, beshrew, curse.

shrieck, *n.*, screech.

shrighte, *pp.*, shrieked.

shul, shall.

shund, *v.*, to avoid, escape
from, eschew.

sic, such.

sikerer, *adj.*, surer, more to be
trusted.

sikerly, *adv.*, certainly, surely,
truly.

siller, *n.*, silver, money in
general.

sin, sith, or sithena, *conj.* and
adv., since.

skellum, *n.*, a good for nothing.

skelpin, *adj.*, hastening, mov-
ing quickly.

skirl, *v.*, to cry out shrilly.

sklentim, *adj.*, slanting, squint-
ing.

slaes, *n.*, sloes.

slaps, *n.*, a breach in the fence,
an opening.

slee or sleen, *v.*, to slay.

sleekit, *adj.*, sleek.

sleeth, slays (*v. present*).

sleighte, *n.*, cunning.

slough, *n.*, slough, mire.

smeddum, *n.*, powder.

smerte, *adv.*, smartly, sharply.

smiddie, *n.*, smithy.

smoorred, *pp.*, smothered.

smyrtie, *n.*, litter.

snash, *n.*, abuse.

sneeshin-mill, *n.*, snuffbox.

snell, *adj.*, bitter, biting.

snewed, abounded (*v. preterit*).

snibben, *pp.*, snubbed, re-
proved.

snowkit, *pp.*, snuffed.

snubbes, *n.*, snags.

solas, *n.*, amusement.

som-del, *adv.*, somewhat.

somer, *n.*, summer.

Somers-heat, Somerset.

somnour, *n.*, summoner, an
officer who summoned delin-
quents before the ecclesias-
tical courts.

sond, *n.*, sand.

sonsie, *adj.*, pleasant, good-
natured, jolly.

sooth, *n.*, truth, *adj.*, true, as
adv., truly.

soothly, *adv.*, truly.

sooty, *adj.*, begrimed with soot.

sop, *n.*, sop (of toasted bread),
sop in wyn.

soper, *n.*, supper.

sore, *adv.*, sorely.

sote, *adv.*, sweetly.

sothe, *n.*, truth.

souce, souse.

souded, *pp.*, confirmed.

soukings, sucking (*v. pres.*
partic.).

soule, *n.*, soul.

souninge in, tending to.

sowne, *v.*, to sound.

sowther, *v.*, to solder.

spairges, *n. pl.*, splashes.

sparwe, *n.*, sparrow.

spear, *v.*, to wean (by disgust).

sped, *v.*, to prosper.

spiers, asks (*v. present*).

splore, *n.*, frolic, a carousal.

spones, *n. pl.*, spoons.

spores, *n. pl.*, spurs.

sporne, *v.*, to spurn.

sprattie, *v.*, to sprawl,
scramble.

spright, *n.*, the mind, breath, spirit.
 spunkies, *n. pl.*, spirits, will o' wisps.
 spyced, *pp.*, scrupulous.
 stacher, *v.*, to stagger, totter.
 stal, *pp.*, secretly retreated; also stole, stolen.
 stampe, stamp, bray in a mortar (*v. present*).
 stane, *n.*, stone.
 staw, stole (*v. preterit*).
 stechin, cramming, filling (*v. pres. partic.*).
 steeks, *n. pl.*, stitches.
 stemed, shone, glowed (*v. preterit*).
 stents, *n. pl.*, assessments, dues, taxes.
 stepe, *adj.*, glittering, bright.
 sterlinges, *n. pl.*, sterling coins.
 sterres, *n.*, stars.
 sterve, *v.*, to die.
 stevene, *n.*, voice, sound, language.
 stibble, *n.*, stubble.
 stiked (swyn), a stuck pig.
 stones, *n. pl.*, precious stones.
 stoor, *n.*, store stock (of a farm).
 stope, *pp.*, advanced.
 stot, *n.*, stallion, horse, cob.
 stoure, *n.*, dust, conflict, strife.
 stownd, *pp.*, stunned.
 stowre, *n.*, turmoil, strife; a combat; distress, misfortune.
 streit, *adj.*, narrow.
 streyneth, constrains (*v. present*).
 strike, *n.*, hank (of flax), a handful that may be heckled at once.
 strondes, *n. pl.*, shores.
 strowd, *pp.*, strewn.
 sturte, *v.*, to steer, guide.
 sturt, *n.*, worry, trouble.
 substilly, *adv.*, craftily.
 suffisaunce, *n.*, sufficiency.
 sugh, *n.*, a sigh; a moan of the wind.
 superfluitee, *n.*, superfluity, excess.
 surcote, *n.*, topcoat, overcoat.
 sustres, *n. pl.*, sisters.
 swal, was puffed up with anger.
 swankies, *n. pl.*, strapping fellows.
 swatch, *n.*, a sample.
 swats, *n.*, new ale.
 swevene, *n.*, dream.
 swich, *adj.*, such.
 swinken, *v.*, (Ger.) to toil, labour.
 swote, *adj.*, sweet.

swowning, swooning (*v. pres. partic.*).
 swythe, *adv.*, quickly.
 syne, *adv.* and *conj.*, since, then, ago.
 sythes, *n. pl.*, times.
 tabard, *n.*, a ploughman's loose frock.
 taille, *n.*, tally, an account scored with notched sticks.
 takel, *n.*, tackle, gear, arrows.
 talants, *n. pl.*, talons.
 talen, *v.* (Ger.) to tell tales.
 tapicer, *n.*, upholsterer, maker of carpets.
 tappestere, *n.*, female tapster, barmaid.
 targe, *n.*, target, shield.
 tassaille, *for*, to assoille, i.e. to absolve.
 tawted, *pp.*, matted, with matted hair.
 tead, *n.*, a torch.
 tempest thee noight, do not violently distress thyself.
 tentie, *adj.*, watchful, careful, heedful.
 terciane, *adj.*, tertian.
 texpounden, *v.*, to expound, explain.
 thack, *n.*, thatch.
 thack and rape, the covering of a house; hence, the "home necessities."
 thae, *pron.*, those.
 thalights, for thee alights (in thee alights) alighted in thee.
 thanne, *adv.*, then.
 tharray, *for*, the array.
 theech (so), *for*, so thee ich, as I may thrive, as I hope to prosper.
 thegither, *adv.*, together.
 thencrees, *for*, the increase.
 thestat, *for*, the state (or condition).
 thewes, *n. pl.*, manners, behavior, mental and moral qualities.
 thole, *v.*, to endure, suffer.
 thrang, *n.*, throng.
 thrave, 24 sheaves of corn.
 thilke, *that*.
 tho, *pron.*, those.
 thowes, *n. pl.*, thaws.
 thrall, *n.*, slave, slavery.
 thridle, *n.*, third.
 thrillant, *adj.*, piercing, keen.
 thrifty, *adj.*, thirty.
 thryes, *adv.*, thrice.
 thurgh, *prep.*, by means of.
 tikelnesse, *n.*, instability, lack of steadiness.
 timmer, *n.*, timber.
 tint, *adj.*, lost.

tippet, *n.*, tippet, cape.
 tiptoon, *n. pl.*, tiptoes.
 tirin, *adj.*, stripping, uncovering, unroofing.
 tither, the other.
 Tithones, son of Laomedon, the king of Troy, mortal favorite of Aurora.
 togidre, *adv.*, together.
 tombesteres, *n. pl.*, female dancers, literally female tumblers.
 toon, *n. pl.*, toes.
 tord, *n.*, piece of dung.
 torn, *n.*, turn.
 toste, *n.*, toast.
 to-tere, *v.*, to rend in pieces.
 totten, *v.*, to take toll.
 tousie, *adj.*, shaggy.
 tow, *n.*, flax, rope.
 towmond, *n.*, a twelvemonth.
 towre, a term of falconry; to soar in a spiral; here applied to deer far up on the mountain.
 towres (those bricky towers) the Temple. Formerly the abode of the Knights Templar; after the dissolution of their order, granted to the Knights of St. John, and by them leased to the students of Common Law, who have remained there ever since.
 trad, *pp.*, treaded, copulated.
 traynes, *n. pl.*, the tails; guide, artifice; a draw-net.
 traytours, *n. pl.*, traitors.
 treen, *n. pl.*, trees.
 trete, *v.*, to treat.
 trets, *adj.*, well proportioned, long.
 trompe, *n.*, trumpet.
 trouthe, *n.*, truth.
 trouwe, *v.*, to believe.
 tuked, *pp.*, tucked.
 twalpenne, *n.*, a penny.
 twalpaint, 12 pint.
 twa or tweye, *adj.*, two.
 twinne, *v.*, to sever, part.
 tyke, *n.*, a dog.
 tythes, *n. pl.*, tithes.
 unbrent, *pp.*, unburnt.
 unco, *adj.*, strange, remarkable, uncommon.
 unco guid, the rigidly righteous.
 uncurded, *pp.*, uncurdled.
 unndern, *n.*, a particular time in the morning is here implied, about 9 A.M. or later.
 unkend, *pp.*, unknown.
 unlich, *adv.*, unlike.
 unnethes, *adv.*, scarcely, hardly, with difficulty.

unweeting, *adj.*, ignorant, unconscious, by accident.
usquabee, *n.*, whisky.

vache, *n.*, cow, beast.
variable, *adj.*, various.
vavasour, *n.*, a subvassal (next in dignity to a baron).
vernicle, *n.*, vernicle.
veyl, *n.*, veil.
vigilée, *n.*, vigils, evening meetings.
vitaille, *n.*, victuals.
voys, *n.*, voice.

wabster, *n.*, weaver.
wad, would, would have (*v. present*).
wae, *adj.*, woeful, sorrowful (sometimes used sarcastically).

Waesucks, *interj.*, Alas!

wal, *n.*, wall.
walet, *n.*, wallet.
wan, won, gained (*v. preterit*).
war or ware, *adj.*, prudent, discreet.
wark, *n.*, work.
wark-lume, *n.*, a tool, a loom.
warlocks, *n. pl.*, wizards.
waryce, *v.*, to heal, cure.
wa's, *n. pl.*, walls.
wast, *n.*, waste.
wastel-breed, *n.*, cake, bread, bread of the best quality.
waught, *n.*, deep draught.
wawlie, *adj.*, ample, large, robust.

wayk, *adj.*, weak.
wayne, *a.*, vain; *n.*, vein.
weans, *n.*, a child.
webbe, *n.*, a weaver.
weel-gaun, *adj.*, well-going.
weel-hained, *adj.*, well saved.
weet, *v.*, to wet.
wele, *n.*, happiness, fortune.
welke, *v.*, to fade.
welked, *pp.*, withered.
welle, *n.*, well, source, spring.
wende, would have thought.
wenen, *v.*, to ween, suppose.

weneth, imagines (*v. present*).
werre, *n.*, war.
werte, *n.*, wart.
weyeden, *pp.*, weighed.
weyes, *n. pl.*, ways.
Weylaway, *interj.*, Alas!
wha, *pron.*, who.
whally, *adj.*, discolored (as in wall eyes).
whalpit, *pp.*, whelped.
whang, *n.*, a large slice.
wheep, *n.*, small beer.
whelkes, *n. pl.*, pimples, blotches.
whelpe, *n.*, puppy, cub.
whilom, *adv.*, once on a time, formerly.
whott, *adj.*, hot.
whylease, sometime ago or before, lately.
whyles, sometimes, now and then.
whyt, *adj.*, white.
wimpel, *n.*, wimpel, covering for the head, gathered around it, and pleated under the chin.
widwe, *n.*, widow.
wight, *n.*, person, creature, man.
wike, *n.*, week.
wikke, *adj.*, wicked.
winnocks, *n. pl.*, windows.
wiste, knew (*v. preterit*).
witing, *n.*, knowledge, cognizance.
wize, *adj.*, wise, way.
wlatsom, *adj.*, disgusting, heinous.
wo, *adj.*, sad, grieved.
wol, will (*v. present*).
wolden, would wish (*v. present*).
woldestow, *for*, wouldst you.
woll, *a.*, well, *n.*, wool.
wolle, *n.*, wool.
wone, *n.*, custom, usage.
woning, dwelling (*v. pres. partic.*).
wonner, a wonder, marvel (sometimes used contemptuously).

woodnesse, *n.*, madness, rage.
woot, (*I*), I know (*v. present*).
wortes, *n. pl.*, herbs.
wrack, *n.*, violence; *v.*, to wreck.
wreke, *v.*, to wreak, avenge.
wyf, *n.*, wife.
wyliecoat, *n.*, undervest.
wyn, *n.*, wine.

yaf, gavest (*v. present*).
y-bore, *pp.*, borne, carried.
y-boren, *pp.*, born.
y-chaped, *pp.*, furnished with chapes or metal caps (placed at the end of the sheath).
y-corven, *pp.*, cut.
ydel, *adj.*, idle.
ydrad, *pp.*, dreaded.
y-drawe, *pp.*, drawn.
yeddinges, *n. pl.*, songs.
yede, *v.*, to go.
yeldhalle, *n.*, guild-hall.
yell's, *adj.*, dry, milkless.
yelwe, *adj.*, yellow.
yeman, *n.*, yeoman.
yemanly, *adv.*, in a yeomanlike manner.
yën, *n. pl.*, eyes.
yerde, *n.*, switch.
yerne, error for erme, *v.*, to feel sad, grieve.
yfed, *pp.*, fed.
yill-caup, *n.*, a wooden drinking vessel.
y-knowe, *pp.*, known.
y-led, *pp.*, guided, conducted.
y-logged, *pp.*, lodged.
y-nogh, enough.
yod, *pp.*, gone.
yont, *adv.*, beyond.
yplaste, *pp.*, placed.
y-preved, *pp.*, proved (to be).
y-sprad, *pp.*, spread.
yts, *pron.*, its.
yve, *n.*, ivy.
yvel, *adj.*, evil.
y-wis, *adv.*, certainly, truly, verily.
y-write, *pp.*, written.

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

- A barking sound the Shepherd hears, 338.
 Ae fond kiss, then we sever! 296.
 A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine, 22.
 A glorious people vibrated again . . . 536.
 Ah, what can all thee, wretched wight, 568.
 A little mushroom table spread, 122.
 All human things are subject to decay, 180.
 All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their
 lair, 382.
 All that I know, 773.
 All thoughts, all passions, all delights, 367.
 Almost at the root, 353.
 Among these latter busts we count by scores,
 777.
 And is this — Yarrow? — *This the Stream*,
 354.
 And the first gray of morning filled the east,
 584.
 And thou art dead, as young and fair, 450.
 A povre widwe, somdel stope in age, 14.
 A rose-bud, by my early walk, 294.
 A simple Child, 303.
 As Julia once a-slumbering lay, 120.
 A slumber did my spirit seal, 309.
 As one who hangs down-bending from the side,
 319.
 As thro' the land at eve we went, 627.
 A sweet disorder in the dress, 119.
 As when a ship, that flies fayre under sayle,
 55.
 A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, 546.
 At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-
 time, 832.
 Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea, 498.
 Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose
 bones, 136.
 A wanderer is man from his birth, 602.
 Ay me! how many perils doe enfold, 69.

 Bards of Passion and of Mirth, 560.
 Behold her, single in the field, 335.
 Behold! I see the haven nigh at hand, 101.
 Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed, 334.
 Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington, 318.
 Bid me to live, and I will live, 121.
 Blow, blow, thou winter wind, 115.
 Boot, saddle, to horse, and away! 760.
 Break, break, break, 626.

 Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, 385.
 Bright Flower! whose home is everywhere, 334.
 Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou
 art! 580.
 Bright tulips, we do know, 123.
 Bury the Great Duke, 666.
 But anxious cares the pensive nymph opprest,
 215.
 But do not let us quarrel any more, 787.
 By this the northerne wagoner had set, 29.

 Calme was the day, and through the trem-
 bling ayre, 112.
 Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with
 flowers, 212.
 Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars, 340.
 Coldly, sadly descends, 612.
 Come, dear children, let us away, 590.
 Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain
 height, 628.
 Come into the garden, Maud, 664.
 Come unto these yellow sands, 115.
 Comin thro' the rye, poor body, 298.
 'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the
 land, 622.
 Creep into thy narrow bed, 599.
 Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a
 cloud, 136.
 Cupid, as he lay among, 119.
 Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes,
 though clear, 137.

 Daughter of Jove, relentless Power, 247.
 Day! Faster and more fast, 751.
 Dear, though to part it be a hell, 119.
 Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars,
 187.
 Duncan Gray cam here to woo, 299.

 Earth has not anything to show more fair, 332.
 Earth, Ocean, Air, beloved brotherhood! 508.
 Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable, 699.
 Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind! 470.
 Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky! 355.
 Ever let the Fancy roam, 559.

 Fair as the earliest beam of eastern light, 400.
 Fair daffodils, we weep to see, 122.

- Fair pledges of a fruitful tree, 123.
 Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up,
 313.
 Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
 332.
 Fare thee well! and if for ever, 451.
 Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the
 North, 295.
 Fear death? — to feel the fog in my throat,
 797.
 First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and
 rock! 825.
 Five years have past; five summers, with the
 length, 305.
 Flee fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfast-
 nesse, 1.
 Flower in the crannied wall, 626.
 For auld lang syne, my dear, 298.
 From harmony, from heav'nly harmony, 196.
 From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done,
 719.
 From Stirling castle we have seen, 336.
 Full fathom five thy father lies, 116.
 Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, 121.
 Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn,
 120.
 Oethe in Weimar sleeps; and Greece, 611.
 Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine, 294.
 Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill,
 603.
 Go thou forth, my book, though late, 124.
 Grow old along with me! 790.
 Had I but plenty of money, money enough
 and to spare, 764.
 Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! 535.
 Happy the man whose wish and care, 205.
 Hark! ah, the nightingale, 598.
 Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
 115.
 Harp of the North! that mouldering long hast
 hung, 392.
 Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star,
 377.
 Ha! where ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie? 287.
 Hence, loathed Melancholy, 130.
 Hence, vain deluding Joys, 132.
 Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee, 124.
 High in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
 345.
 High on a throne of royal state, which far,
 149.
 High time now gan it wex for Una fayre, 93.
 Home they brought her warrior dead, 627.
 'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-more of
 this,' 13.
 How changed is here each spot man makes o'
 fills! 608.
 How sleep the brave, who sink to rest, 233.
 I am just seventeen years and five months
 old, 798.
 I am monarch of all I survey, 262.
 I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave! 781.
 I and Clive were friends — and why not? 827.
 I arise from dreams of thee, 533.
 I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 534.
 I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way,
 541.
 If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song, 241.
 I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden, 541.
 If from the public way you turn your steps,
 324.
 If this great world of joy and pain, 357.
 I held it truth, with him who sings, 629.
 I met a traveller from an antique land, 528.
 In one of those excursions may they ne'er
 322.
 In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street, 600.
 In the hour of my distress, 124.
 In these deep solitudes and awful cells, 220.
 In these gay thoughts the Loves and Graces
 shine, 205.
 In this lone, open glade I lie, 602.
 In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 248.
 In Xanadu did Kubla Khan, 377.
 I said — Then, dearest, since 't is so, 776.
 I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bow-
 ers, 119.
 I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he,
 761.
 Is there for honest poverty, 300.
 Is this a fast, to keep, 126.
 Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child,
 414.
 It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, 333.
 It is an ancient Mariner, 358.
 "It is not to be thought of that the Flood,"
 334.
 It little profits that an idle king, 624.
 I travelled among unknown men, 309.
 It seems a day, 307.
 It was a dreary morning when the wheels, 316.
 I wandered lonely as a cloud, 337.
 I weep for Adonais — he is dead! 518.
 Just for a handful of silver he left us, 760.
 John Anderson my jo, John, 295.
 John Gilpin was a citizen, 273.
 Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King, 759.

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
760.

Know ye the land where the cypress and
myrtle, 456.

Leodogran, the king of Cameliard, 670.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds, 118.

Light flows our war of mocking words; and
yet, 601.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled
shore, 117.

Live, live with me, and thou shalt see, 123.

Lo! I the man, whose Muse whylome did
maske, 21.

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell, 125.

Maid of Athens, ere we part, 449.

Many a green isle needs must be, 528.

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour,
333.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
544.

Music, when soft voices die, 542.

My hair is grey, but not with years, 470.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains,
568.

My heart leaps up when I behold, 330.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not
here, 295.

My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend!
282.

My seventeenth year was come, 315.

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name, 452.

My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless
spot, 347.

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-
west died away, 766.

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day, 368.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead, 118.

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments, 117.

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
210.

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollow-
ness, 35.

Now the golden morn aloft, 248.

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns,
287.

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room,
340.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard, 336.

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair, 412.

Of all the cities in Romanian lands, 199.

Of a' the airts the wind can blow, 295.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit,
138.

O Friend! I know not which way I must look,
333.

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray, 310.

Oh goodly golden chayne! wherewith yfere, 76.

O Rome, my country! city of the soul! 432.

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom, 455.

Oh, to be in England, 765.

O, Jenny's a' weet, poor body, 298.

O Lord our lord, thy name how mervellous,
10.

O loyal to the royal in thyself, 749.

O Mary, at thy window be! 301.

O mistress mine, where are you roaming? 115.

O, my luve is like a red, red rose, 298.

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee, 333.

On either side the river lie, 617.

One word is too often profaned, 542.

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred
ninety-two, 823.

O, saw ye bonie Lesley, 299.

O that those lips had language! Life has passed,
276.

O that 't were possible, 665.

O thou by Nature taught, 238.

O Thou that in the Heavens does dwell, 293.

O thou, the wonder of all days! 125.

O thou! whatever title suit thee, 281.

O thou who bad'st thy turtles bear, 242.

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's
being, 532.

O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut, 296.

O world! O life! O time! 543.

O ye, wha are sae guid yoursel, 288.

Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat,
732.

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow, 249.

Rough wind, that moanest loud, 543.

Rousseau, Voltaire, our Gibbon, and De
Staël, 470.

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I
tell, ere thou speak," 766.

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have
frowned, 356.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled, 299.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, 579.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? 116.

Shapcot! to thee the fairy state, 122.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways, 309.

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears,
217.

She should never have looked at me, 762.

She walks in beauty, like the night, 455.

"She was a Phantom of delight," 337.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, 298.

Shut not so soon; the dull-ey'd night, 122.

- 'Shut, shut the door, good John!' fatigued I said, 225.
 Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea, 117.
 Som tyme this world was so stedfast and stable, 1.
 Souls of Poets dead and gone, 544.
 St. Agnes' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was! 560.
 Stern Daughter of the Voice of God! 338.
 Stop, Christian passer-by! — Stop, child of God, 383.
 Strange fits of passion have I known, 308.
 Strew on her roses, roses, 581.
 Strong Son of God, immortal Love, 629.
 Sunset and evening star, 750.
 Sweet and low, sweet and low, 627.
 Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain, 256.
 Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes, 119.
 Swiftly walk o'er the western wave, 542.
 Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean, 627.
 Tell me where is fancy bred, 115.
 That second time they hunted me, 774.
 That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, 773.
 That story which the bold Sir Bedivere, 742.
 That time of year thou mayst in me behold, 118.
 The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, 456.
 The Chieftain reared his form on high, 409.
 The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, 245.
 The Deil's awa, the Deil's awa, 297.
 The Deil cam fiddlin thro' the town, 297.
 The fountains mingle with the river, 534.
 The Frost performs its secret ministry, 379.
 The gallant Youth, who may have gained, 356.
 The gloomy night is gath'ring fast, 290.
 The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece! 496.
 The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent, 677.
 The lovely lass of Inverness, 297.
 The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought, 48.
 The Poet's soul was with me at that time, 320.
 The poplars are fell'd; farewell to the shade, 278.
 There be none of Beauty's daughters, 451.
 There is sweet music here that softer falls, 623.
 There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier, 618.
 There's a palace in Florence, the world knows well, 778.
 There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away, 450.
 There's not a nook within this solemn Pass, 357.
 There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye did! 307.
 There was a lass, and she was fair! 301.
 There was a roaring in the wind all night, 33.
 There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, 342.
 There was in Asie, in a greet citee, 11.
 The sea is calm to-night, 598.
 These to His Memory — since he held them dear, 669.
 The sky is overcast, 303.
 The splendor falls on castle walls, 627.
 The sun is warm, the sky is clear, 532.
 The sun upon the Weirclaw Hill, 413.
 The twentieth year is well-nigh past, 279.
 The way was long, the wind was cold, 384.
 The woods decay, the woods decay and fall, 625.
 The world is too much with us; late and soon, 341.
 This is the month, and this the happy morn, 127.
 Though the day of my destiny's over, 452.
 Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray, 296.
 Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, 567.
 Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies, 193.
 Three years she grew in sun and shower, 309.
 Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused, 614.
 Tir'd with all these, forrestful death I cry, 117.
 'T is known, at least it should be, that throughout, 484.
 'T is morning; and the sun with ruddy orb, 262.
 'T is the middle of night by the castle clock, 370.
 Titan! to whose immortal eyes, 483.
 To die be given us, or attain! 581.
 To fair Fidele's grassy tomb, 243.
 Toll for the brave! 278.
 To me, fair friend, you never can be old, 118.
 To one who has been long in city pent, 544.
 T' our tale. — The feast was over, the slave gone, 498.
 Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men, 333.
 'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won, 196.
 'Twas on a lofty vase's side, 244.
 Under the greenwood tree, 115.
 Upon a time, before the faery broods, 570.
 Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books, 304.
 Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying, 386.
 Waken, lords and ladies gay, 412.
 We are na fou, we're nae that fou, 296.

- We cannot kindle when we will, 599.
 Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r, 286.
 Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie, 285.
 Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made,
 380.
 'Wel sey'd, by *corpus dominus*,' quod our
 hoste, 10.
 When that Aprille with his shoures sote, 2.
 What beck'ning ghost along the moonlight
 shade, 206.
 What dire offence from am'rous causes
 springs, 209.
 What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might,
 84.
 What man so wise, what earthly witt so ware,
 62.
 What, you are stepping westward? — Yea,
 335.
 Whenas in silks my Julia goes, 124.
 When biting Boreas, fell and doure, 289.
 Whence is it that, amased, I hear, 279.
 When chapman billies leave the street, 290.
 When coldness wraps this suffering clay, 455.
 When I behold a forest spread, 124.
 When I consider how my light is spent, 137.
 When I have borne in memory what has
 tamed, 334.
 When I have fears that I may cease to be, 544.
 When I have seen by Time's fell hand de-
 faced, 117.
 When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's
 eyes, 116.
 When in the chronicle of wasted time, 118.
 When lovely woman stoops to folly, 261.
 When Music, heav'nly maid, was young, 342.
 When Ruth was left half desolate, 310.
 When the lamp is shattered, 543.
 When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,
 116.
 When we two parted, 449.
 Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must
 go, 341.
 Where the bee sucks, there suck I, 116.
 Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,
 763.
 While, lost to all his former mirth, 240.
 While you, great Patron of Mankind! sustain,
 231.
 Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he, 339.
 'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of
 yore, 499.
 Who shall awake the Spartan fife, 239.
 Why I tie about thy wrist, 122.
 Why weep ye by the tide, ladie? 413.
 Why, William, on that cold grey stone, 304.
 'Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
 793.
 Ye banks and braes and streams around, 300.
 Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon, 297.
 Ye distant spires, ye antique towers, 244.
 Ye have been fresh and green, 121.
 Ye learned sisters, which have oftentimes, 107.
 Ye may simper, blush and smile, 121.
 Yet are they here the same unbroken knot,
 344.
 Yet deem not, Friend! that human kind with
 me, 322.
 Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,
 133.
 Yet still in me with those soft luxuries, 320.
 You know, we French stormed Ratisbon, 773.
 Young knight what ever, that dost armes pro-
 fesse, 41.

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES

- Address to the Deil, 281.
 Address to the Unco Guid, 288.
 A Dirge, 543.
 Adonais, 518.
 Ae Fond Kiss, 296.
 A Lament, 543.
 Alastor, 508.
 Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music, 196.
 Ancient Mariner, The, 358.
 Andrea del Sarto, 787.
 And thou art dead, as young and fair, 450.
 A Night-Piece, 303.
 A Red, Red Rose, 298.
 ARNOLD, *Introd.*, xiv; Poems, 581-616; *Biog.*, 888-890.
 A Rose-Bud, by my Early Walk, 294.
 Art above Nature, 124.
 "A slumber did my spirit seal," 309.
 A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 196.
 "As thro' the land at eve we went," 627.
 A Summer Night, 600.
 A Thanksgiving to God for His House, 125.
 Auld Lang Syne, 298.
 A Winter Night, 289.
 Beppo, 484.
 "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," 115.
 Boot and Saddle, 760.
 "Break, break, break," 626.
 Bride of Abydos, The, 456.
 BROWNING, *Introd.*, xiv-xv; Poems, 751-832; *Biog.*, 893-896.
 Buried Life, The, 601.
 BURNS, *Introd.*, xi; Poems, 281-302; *Biog.*, 867-870.
 BYRON, *Introd.*, xii-xiii; Poems, 414-507; *Biog.*, 879-882.
 Caliban upon Setebos, 793.
 Canterbury Tales, Prologue, 2.
 Cavalier Tunes, 759.
 Character of the Happy Warrior, 339.
 CHAUCER, *Introd.*, iii-iv; Poems, 1-20; *Biog.*, 835-837.
 Childe Harold, 414.
 Christabel, 370.
 Clive, 827.
 COLERIDGE, *Introd.*, xi-xii; Poems, 358-381; *Biog.*, 874-877.
 COLLINS, *Introd.*, ix; Poems, 238-243; *Biog.*, 856-858.
 "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height," 628.
 "Come into the garden, Maud," 664.
 "Come unto these yellow sands," 115.
 Coming of Arthur, 670.
 Comin' Thro' the Rye, 298.
 Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais, August, 1802, 332.
 Composed by the side of Grasmere Lake, 341.
 Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802, 332.
 Corinna's Going A-Maying, 120.
 Cotter's Saturday Night, The, 282.
 COWPER, *Introd.*, x; Poems, 262-280; *Biog.*, 865-867.
 Cristina, 762.
 Crossing the Bar, 750.
 Dedication to Idylls of the King, 669.
 Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman, The, 297.
 Dejection: an Ode, 380.
 Delight in Disorder, 119.
 Destruction of Sennacherib, The, 456.
 Dirge of Jephthah's Daughter, The, 125.
 Dirge in Cymbeline, 243.
 Don Juan, 496.
 Dover Beach, 598.
 DRYDEN, *Introd.*, viii; Poems, 180-204; *Biog.*, 850-853.
 Duncan Gray, 299.
 Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady, 206.
 Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, 245.
 Eloisa to Abelard, 220.
 Endymion. Book I, 545.
 Epilogue ("At the midnight"), 832.
 Epistle to Augusta ("My sister! my sweet sister!"), 452.
 Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, being the Prologue to the Satires, 225.
 Epistle to Mrs. Blount, with the works of Voltaire, 205.
 Epitaph (Nov. 1833), 383.

ithalamion, 107.
 e of St. Agnes, The, 560.
 postulation and Reply, 304.

erie Queene. Book I, 21.
 ncy, 559.
 "Are thee well," 451.
 delity, 338.
 rst Epistle of the Second Book of Horace,
 The, 231.
 "Flower in the crannied wall," 626.
 forsaken Mermaid, The, 596. —
 "A Lippo Lippi, 781.
 "Lost at Midnight, 379.
 Full fathom five thy father lies," 116.

areth and Lynette, 677.
 ipsies, 344.
 ive a Rouse, 760.
 OLDSMITH, Introd., ix; Poems, 249-261;
 Biog., 861-864.
 RAY, Introd., ix; Poems, 244-248; Biog.,
 858-861.
 reen Linnet, The, 334.
 uinevere, 732.

Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings,"
 115.
 FERRICK, Introd., vii; Poems, 119-126; Biog.,
 843-846.
 fervé Riel, 823.
 Highland Mary, 300.
 His Litany to the Holy Spirit, 124.
 Holy Grail, The, 719.
 Holy Willie's Prayer, 293.
 "Home they brought her warrior dead," 627.
 Home-Thoughts, from Abroad, 765.
 Home-Thoughts, from the Sea, 766.
 How they brought the Good News from
 Ghent to Aix, 761.
 Hunting Song. "Waken, Lords and ladies
 gay," 412.
 Hymn before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Cha-
 mouni, 377.
 Hymn on the morning of Christ's Nativity,
 127.

Idylls of the King, 669.
 "If this great world of joy and pain," 357.
 Il Penseroso, 132.
 Incident of the French Camp, 773.
 Indian Serenade, The, 533.
 In London, September, 1802 ("O Friend! I
 know not which way I must look"), 333.
 In Memoriam, A. H. H., 628.
 Is there for Honest Poverty, 300.
 Italian in England, The, 774.

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,"
 332.
 It is not to be thought of that the Flood,
 334.
 "I travelled among unknown men," 309.
 "I wandered lonely as a cloud," 337.

Jock of Haseledean, 413.
 John Anderson my Jo, 295.
 John Gilpin, 273.

KEATS, Introd., xiii; Poems, 544-580; Biog.,
 885-888.
 Kubla Khan, 377.

La Belle Dame sans Merci, 568.
 Lady of Shalott, The, 617.
 Lady of the Lake, 392.
 Lak of Stedfastnesse, 1.
 L'Allegro, 130.
 Lamia, 570.
 Lancelot and Elaine, 699.
 Last Ride Together, The, 776.
 Lay of the Last Minstrel, The, 384.
 Let me not to the marriage of true minds,
 118.
 Like as the waves make towards the pebbled
 shore, 117.
 Lines ("When the lamp is shattered"), 543.
 Lines composed a few miles above Tintern
 Abbey, 305.
 Lines on the Mermaid Tavern ("Souls of
 Poets dead and gone"), 544.
 Lines written among the Euganean Hills,
 528.
 Lines written in Kensington Gardens, 602.
 London, 1802 ("Milton! thou should'st be
 living at this hour"), 333.
 Lost Leader, The, 760.
 Love, 367.
 Love among the Ruins, 763.
 Lovely Lass of Inverness, The, 297.
 Love's Philosophy, 534.
 Lucy Gray, 310.
 Lycidas, 133.

Mac Flecknoe, 180.
 "Maid of Athens," 449.
 Marching Along, 759.
 Mary Morison, 301.
 Maseppa, 474.
 Memorial Verses, 611.
 Michael, 324.
 MILTON, Introd., vii; Poems, 127-179; Biog.,
 846-850.
 Morality, 599.
 "My heart leaps up when I behold," 330.

My heart's in the Highlands, 295.

My Last Duchess, 773.

My Star, 773.

Night-Piece to Julia, The, 124.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead, 118.

Nonne Prestes Tale, 14.

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments, 117.

"Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room," 340.

Nutting, 307.

Oberon's Feast, 122.

Ode ("Bards of Passion and of Mirth"), 560.

Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood, 341.

Ode on a Grecian Urn, 567.

Ode on Solitude, 205.

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, 666.

Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude, 248.

Ode to a Lady on the Death of Colonel Ross, in the action of Fontenoy, 240.

Ode to a Nightingale, 568.

Ode to Duty, 337.

Ode to Evening, 241.

Ode to Liberty, 239.

Ode to Liberty, 536.

Ode to Peace, 242.

Ode to Simplicity, 238.

Ode to the West Wind, 532.

Ode written in the beginning of the year 1746, 238.

Enone, 618.

Of a' the Airs, 295.

"Oh! Snatch'd away in beauty's bloom," 455.

"O mistress mine, where are you roaming," 115.

On a Distant Prospect of Eton College, 244.

On first looking into Chapman's Homer, 544.

On his Blindness, 137.

On the Death of a Favorite Cat, 244.

On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic, 333.

On the Late Massacre in Piemont, 136.

On the Loss of the Royal George, 278.

On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, 127.

On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk, 276.

"O that 't were possible," 665.

Paradise Lost, 138.

Passing of Arthur, The, 742.

Phædippides, 825.

Philomela, 598.

Pippa Passes, 751.

POPE, *Intro.*, viii-ix; *Poems*, 206-237; *Biog.* 853-856.

Prioresses Tale, 10.

Prisoner of Chillon, The, 470.

Prometheus, 483.

Prospice, 797.

Prothalamion, 112.

Protus, 777.

Rabbi Ben Esra, 790.

Rape of the Lock, 208.

Religio Laici, 183.

Requiescat, 581.

Resignation, 581.

Resolution and Independence, 330.

Ring and the Book. Book VII, 798.

Rokeby (Song: "O Brignall banks"), 412.

Rugby Chapel, 612.

Ruth, 310.

Saul, 766.

Saw ye Bonie Lesley, 299.

Scholar Gypsy, The, 603.

"Scorn not the Sonnet," 356.

Scots, wha hae, 299.

SCOTT, *Intro.*, xii; *Poems*, 384-413; *Biog.* 877-879.

SHAKESPEARE, *Intro.*, vi; *Poems*, 115-118; *Biog.*, 841-843.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? 116.

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways," 305.

SHELLEY, *Intro.*, xiii; *Poems*, 508-543; *Biog.* 883-885.

"She was a Phantom of delight," 337.

"She walks in beauty," 455.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea, 117.

Sohrab and Rustum, 584.

Solitary Reaper, The, 335.

Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, 345.

Song! Composed in August, 287.

Sonnet ("To one who has been long in captivity"), 544.

Sonnet ("When I have fears that I may cease to be"), 544.

Sonnet on the death of Mr. Richard West, 242.

Sonnet — Ozymandias, 528.

Sonnet to Lake Leman, 470.

SPENSER, *Intro.*, v; *Poems*, 21-114; *Biog.* 838-841.

Stanzas for Music ("There be none of Beauty's daughters"), 451.

Stanzas for Music ("There's not a joy the world can give"), 450.

anzas from the Grande Chartreuse, 614.
anzas on Woman, 261.
anzas to Augusta ("Though the day of my
destiny's over"), 452.
anzas written in dejection near Naples,
532.
epping Westward, 335.
trange fits of passion have I known," 308.
reet and low, 627.
um O'Shanter, 290.
ears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean," 627.
ell me where is fancy bred," 115.
ENNYSON, *Introd.*, xiv; *Poems*, 617-750;
Biog., 890-893.
hat time of year thou mayst in me behold,
118.
he Argument of his Book, 119.
he Banks o' Doon, 297.
he Bracelet to Julia, 122.
he Captiv'd Bee, 120.
he Cloud, 534.
he Deserted Village, 255.
he Excursion, 346.
he Future, 602.
he Gloomy Night is gathering fast, 290.
he Last Sonnet ("Bright Star! would I
were steadfast as thou art!"), 580.
he Last Word, 599.
he Lotos Eaters and the Choric Song, 622.
he Nightingale, 368.
heodore and Honoria, 199.
he Passions. *An Ode for Music*, 242.
he Poplar Field, 278.
he Prelude, 313.
he Question, 541.
here was a Boy, 307.
here was a Lass, 301.
he Silver Tassie, 294.
The splendor falls on castle walls," 627.
he Statue and the Bust, 778.
The sun upon the Weirclaw Hill," 413.
he Tables Turned, 304.
he Task. *Book V*, 262.
he Traveller, 249.
he Trosachs, 357.
The World is too much with us," 341.
he Wounded Cupid, 119.
hou Lingering Star, 296.
Three years she grew in sun and shower,"
309.
hysis, 608.
ir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,
117.
ithonus, 625.
o ——— ("I fear thy kisses"), 541.

To ——— ("Music, when soft voices die"),
542.
To ——— ("One Word is too oft profane"),
542.
To a Bed of Tulips, 123.
To Adversity, 247.
To a Louse, 287.
To a Mountain Daisy, 286.
To a Mouse, 285.
To Anthea, who may command him any-
thing, 121.
To a Skylark, 535.
To a Skylark ("Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of
the sky!"), 355.
To Autumn, 579.
To Blossoms, 123.
To Cherry-Blossoms, 121.
To Cyriack Skinner (1655), 137.
To Daffodils, 122.
To Daisies, not to shut so soon, 122.
To Dianeme (two poems), 119.
To His Book, 124.
To Keep a True Lent, 126.
To Mary, 279.
To me, fair friend, you never can be old, 118.
To Meadows, 121.
To Night, 542.
To Phyllis, to love and live with him, 123.
To the Cuckoo, 336.
To the Daisy ("Bright Flower! whose home
is everywhere"), 334.
To the Lord General Cromwell, 136.
To the Nightingale, 279.
To the Pious Memory of . . . Mrs. Anne
Killigrew, 193.
To the Queen, 749.
To the Virgins, to make much of time, 121.
To Toussaint L'Ouverture, 333.
Truth, 1.
Ulysses, 624.
"Under the greenwood tree," 115.
Up at a Villa — Down in the City, 764.
Upon Julia's Clothes, 124.
Verses supposed to be written by Alexander
Selkirk, 262.
Vision of Belshazzar, 455.
We are Seven, 303.
Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut, 296.
When Coldness wraps this suffering clay, 455.
"When I have borne in memory," 334.
When I have seen by Time's fell hand de-
faced, 117.
When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's
eyes, 116.

When in the chronicle of wasted time,
118.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,
116.

"When we two parted," 449.

"Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must
go?" 341.

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I," 116.

WORDSWORTH, Introd., xi-xii; Poems, 33
357; Biog., 871-874.

Work without Hope, 382.

Yarrow Visited, 354.

Yarrow Revisited, 356.

Yarrow Unvisited, 336.

Youth and Age, 382.



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